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BETWEEN

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BETWEEN

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

BY

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HISTORICAL CONNECTION

BETWEEN THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE PERSIAN PERIOD.

B.C. 537-333.

1. THE ORIGIN OF JUDAISM. No nation ever experienced a more wonderful transformation than that which Israel passed through during the Babylonian Captivity. The restored Jewish Commonwealth, which was founded by Zerubbabel and Joshua, belongs to an entirely different order of things from the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The differences were partly due to altered political circumstances, of which we shall speak presently. But of far greater importance than these was the new attitude of the people towards their national religion. The religious indifference and proneness to idolatry, against which the pre-exilic prophets had contended in vain, had passed completely away, and were succeeded by a zeal for the honour of Jehovah and an aversion to heathen worship, which are henceforth the strongest features in the national character. Before the Exile the higher truths of the religion of Israel had been maintained by the prophets and a small prophetic party, whilst the great mass of their countrymen recognised no real difference in character between Jehovah and the other gods whom they so eagerly served. The Captivity brought that long conflict to a decisive issue. It was a time of sifting and purification, in

which many individuals lapsed finally into heathenism. It was also a time of national regeneration; the better part of the people rose to a sublime faith in God, and confidence in the future of Israel. They were driven back on the fundamental questions of their relation to Jehovah, and the mission they were destined to fulfil in the unfolding of God's redeeming purpose. In the effort to grasp the imperishable truths of the revelation that had been committed to them, they realised for the first time the immeasurable superiority of their religion to every form of the surrounding paganism; they joyfully embraced their vocation to be the guardians of that true knowledge of God which was to bring salvation to all the ends of the earth.

The little band of exiles who took advantage of the permission of Cyrus to return to their own land, consisted of men who were penetrated with these convictions, and were resolved to give effect to them in the constitution of the new state. Their grand aim was to reconstitute the Jewish nation as the holy people of God, separated from all other nations by the most scrupulous obedience to His law. That is the fundamental idea of Judaism, and how firmly it was held by the leaders of the Return is seen in their stern refusal to make common cause with the Samaritans in the building of the Temple.[a] But to carry out that idea in the practical working of a new social organisation proved to be an exceedingly difficult undertaking. It was indeed rendered easier by the fact that they had no immediate prospect of political independence. Within the limits allowed by the Persian authority they found ample scope to organise themselves as a distinctively religious community. Nevertheless, the task proved too great for the energies of the feeble and struggling colony which had braved the hardships of the first settlement in Canaan. The zeal of the leaders

[a] Ezra iv. 1-4.

was neutralised, not only by opposition from without, but by the apathy, the selfishness, and worldliness that prevailed amongst their followers. It was not till the arrival of Ezra from Babylon, eighty years after the Exile,[a] that things began to improve. Under his auspices a great religious reformation was carried through. The principle of separation from the heathen was revived and relentlessly enforced by the dissolution of all mixed marriages.[b] In a great assembly of the people, the book of the law was adopted as the written constitution of the state, and the authoritative rule of the individual life.[c] Ezra's efforts were vigorously seconded and continued by Nehemiah, who had set himself, in the first instance, to render Jerusalem safe from attack by the rebuilding of the walls. By the joint labours of these two men, Judaism was at last placed on a secure foundation. The law now became at once the standard of holiness, and the symbol of nationality, and in spite of disintegrating tendencies still at work, it gained such a hold on the affections of the Jewish people, that all danger of their being absorbed by the surrounding nations was at an end.

2. THE EXTENT OF THE JEWISH STATE. In the following pages we are to sketch the history of this remarkable community from the close of Nehemiah's administration (about 430 B.C.) to the birth of Christ. But before proceeding to our narrative it is necessary to give an account of some outstanding features of Jewish life which originated during the first century of the Persian dominion. First of all we must notice the smallness of the territory assigned to the new state. The earliest settlement seems to have been confined to the district in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem. As its numbers increased, partly by new accessions from Babylonia, partly by the incorporation of Jews who had remained in the land during the exile, it

a Ezra vii. viii. *b* Ezra ix. x. *c* Neh. viii.-x.

gradually extended to the West and South, but still it covered only a small part of the old kingdom of Judah. In the time of the Maccabees the southern boundary was near Beth-zur, a few miles north of Hebron.[a] The south country was inhabited by the hostile Edomites or Idumeans, who must have taken possession of these regions during the Captivity. To the north lay the territory of the Samaritans, the mixed Israelite and Babylonian race which had been settled there after the destruction of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. And when we remember that the plain along the sea coast was still in the possession of the Philistines, we find that the region actually subject to Jerusalem must have been considerably less than 1000 square miles. Within these narrow limits, however, the Jewish people grew up into a vigorous and compact nation, with powers both of resistance and aggression altogether out of proportion to its external resources. The Judæa which under the Maccabees baffled the efforts of one of the great monarchies of Asia to reduce it to servitude was still a country only about the size of Forfarshire. Although its overflowing population had spread over all the surrounding lands, and Jerusalem had become the mother city of innumerable Jewish colonies scattered all over the east, it was not till the conquests of John Hyrcanus, at the close of the second century, that it began to extend its political boundaries.

3. THE GROWTH OF THE HIGH-PRIESTLY POWER. Throughout the Persian Period the High-priesthood was steadily gaining in dignity and importance. It was the only office of ancient Hebrew origin which had survived the Exile, and for that

[a] See below, p. 46. In the time of Nehemiah we read of Jews living in the southern districts as far as Beer-sheba (ch. xi. 25-35). These must either have been detached Jewish settlements in the midst of the Idumean population, or else we must suppose that the latter afterwards gained the upper hand and drove the Jews back beyond Hebron.

reason alone it would have been the natural centre round which the elements of order in the new community might arrange themselves. It was, moreover, the highest earthly authority recognised by the Law. For the Law took no cognisance of the Persian supremacy or the obligations which it involved. The nation had no king but God, and His representative on earth was the High Priest. For a time the sacred and the secular authority were kept distinct by the appointment of civil governors, resident in Jerusalem, who might be Jews, like Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, but were probably in other instances foreigners. By degrees, however, and by an almost inevitable process, the political power passed into the hands of the High Priest. As the religious head of a religious commonwealth, holding his office by hereditary right, he could not fail to be the most influential person in the State. It proved the easier course for the Persian government to leave the administration of the country in his hands, and hold him directly responsible for the maintenance of order and the payment of the tribute. That this change was actually effected in the latter part of the Persian Period seems evident from an incident related by Josephus.[a] When the High Priest Judas (son of Eliashib, the contemporary of Nehemiah) died, a contest for the office arose between his two sons, Johanan and Joshua. The latter, who, being the younger son, had no legal claim to the High-priesthood, was the friend of a Persian general named Bagoses, who had promised on his father's death to secure for him the succession. This led to a quarrel between the two brothers, in the course of which Joshua was slain by Johanan within the Temple precincts. Upon this Bagoses hastened to Jerusalem, forced his way in spite of all opposition into the Temple, and as a punishment for the outrage, imposed a heavy tax on the daily sacri-

[a] Antiq. xi. 7. 1.

fice, which continued to be exacted for seven years. The story is significant not only as illustrating the growing political importance of the priesthood, but also as foreshadowing the abuses that were afterwards to arise from the combination of secular with spiritual power. The office became a prize for the ambition of worldly ecclesiastics who had no regard for the sacred interests committed to their charge. Like the degenerate Popes of the Middle Ages, such men looked on the priestly dignity chiefly as a means of personal aggrandisement, and were utterly unscrupulous in the methods by which they sought to secure and retain it. It does not appear, however, that these evils attained very serious proportions under the Persian dominion. It is not till the later times of the Jewish state, after the ancient house of Zadok had been disinherited,[a] that we find the worldliness and degradation of the priesthood exercising a baneful influence on the national destiny.

4. THE SCRIBES. But by far the most important factor in the development of Judaism was the rise of a class of professional students and expounders of the law, called *Sopherim* or Scribes. The aim and tendency of Judaism was to make every Jew personally responsible for the keeping of the whole law, and to load the individual conscience with as many obligations as could be brought to bear upon it. A definite rule had to be found for almost every action of daily life, and such rules had to be deduced by one means or another from the law itself. It is evident that no legal code, however comprehensive, —certainly not the Law of Moses—could provide for all the details of human conduct. In the attempt to reduce it to practice, difficulties of various kinds must necessarily arise. It might happen that one requirement was contradicted by another, or that

[a] Zadok was appointed high priest in the beginning of the reign of Solomon (1 Kings ii. 35). The office was filled by his lineal descendants until B.C. 171, a period of over 800 years. (See below, p. 37.)

some part of the Law had no application to the actual circumstances of the time, or again, that a whole department of life was not dealt with in the Law at all. How to be faithful to God's covenant under such conditions came to be a serious theoretical difficulty, and it could only be overcome by the continuous labours of a body of trained experts, who made the study of the Law the great business of their lives.

It might be supposed that the duty of elaborating the Law would naturally have devolved on the priests, the religious leaders of the people. And no doubt many priests, following the example of Ezra, who was himself both priest and scribe, did devote themselves to legal study. But their activity in this direction was always held to be quite distinct from their official duties as priests. As a matter of fact the majority of the scribes were devout and studious laymen, who by force of character, thorough acquaintance with the letter of the Law, and the general agreement which they maintained amongst themselves, obtained respect and authority for their decisions. It was the duty of each scribe to train as many disciples as possible in the knowledge of the Law, and as a rule he was expected to give his instruction without fee or reward. It was necessary, at the same time, that all the scribes throughout the country should act in concert. Since the life of a whole community had to be regulated, uniformity in their teaching was indispensable; and when differences arose between one scribe and another, the question had to be discussed by the most eminent scribes, until some one view or some compromise secured the assent of the majority. Thus the entire body of scribes formed a sort of school or guild, held together not by any constituted authority, but by the necessity of pursuing their common aim in harmony with one another. In this way, then, there grew up a vast system of oral tradition, equally

binding with the written Law, which was transmitted from teacher to pupil, and never committed to writing till the second century A.D. From the nature of the case, it was an endless process. Each new decision opened up fresh cases of difficulty which had to be settled in the same way; and so the mass of authoritative precepts increased from generation to generation, till one wonders that so cumbrous a structure did not break down under its own weight. It need not be denied that many of the scribes were men of true moral insight, and occasionally enunciated maxims of great depth and beauty. But the tendency of the system was towards externalism—a petty and arbitrary handling of questions that should never have been raised, a subtle casuistry which was fatal to the existence of genuine morality. A late scribe gave apt expression to the genius of the whole school when he declared that the great commandment of the Law was the law about fringes. Take care of the fringes, and the garment will take care of itself: keep the little commandments, and you cannot break the great ones;—that was the spirit in which the scribes developed the Law of God. How mischievous the results were every reader has learned from Christ's scathing denunciations of the scribes and lawyers of his time.

5. THE SYNAGOGUE. Whilst the existence of a class of scribes was essential to the perpetuation of legalism, it would not have been sufficient of itself to secure a due regard for the Law on the part of the common people. The systematic instruction imparted in their schools could only be the privilege of the few; some more popular kind of teaching was needful to keep the Law before the mind of the general community. This want was supplied by one of the most characteristic of Jewish institutions—the Synagogue. Although we have no certain information about their origin, we may safely assume that synagogues were generally established in Judæa

at least as far back as the age of Ezra. The inhabitants of every town and village were organized into one or more congregations, who assembled every Sabbath day in the synagogue, or meeting-house, for public worship. The principal feature of the services was always the reading of the Law and the Prophets. As the knowledge of the sacred Hebrew gradually died out, the reading had to be accompanied by a running translation into the Aramaic dialect, which became the vernacular of Palestine. The exposition and application of the passages read were afterwards set forth in a sermon or exhortation, which might be delivered by any person present whom the ruler of the synagogue thought fit to call on.[a] By this means the scribes found an opportunity of bringing the results of their studies to bear on the every-day life of the people, and a very thorough knowledge of the Law was put within the reach of every Israelite. But there was another way in which the institution of the synagogue proved a powerful instrument in maintaining allegiance to the Law. The elders who managed the affairs of the congregation kept strict watch over the morals of each member of the flock, and exercised discipline, amounting in extreme cases to excommunication, on all transgressions of the Law. The whole weight of social opinion was thus brought to bear with crushing force on the life of the individual, and we may be sure that cases of persistent disobedience would be of rare occurrence in communities so carefully organised and superintended as the Jewish congregations were.

6. THE GERMS OF OPPOSING TENDENCIES. We find, then, that from a very early period there were two ruling classes in Judæa, each aspiring to supreme influence on its own lines—the priests on the ground of their official position, and the scribes on the ground of the authority of the Law. There

a See Luke iv. 16, ff; Acts xiii. 15.

was clearly no reason in the nature of things why these two classes should not have acted in perfect harmony with each other. Nevertheless, in course of time they became more and more separated, and at last two sharply contrasted parties were developed from them. The chief cause of this divergence lay in the irreligious tendencies of the priesthood. It is a remarkable fact that of all circles of Jewish society the upper ranks of the priesthood were the least influenced by the theocratic spirit, the most susceptible to foreign influences, and the readiest in times of temptation to abandon the fundamental principles of their religion. Even in the time of Nehemiah the worst obstructives to his measures of reformation were the High Priest and some of his relations, although it was not till a much later period that the spirit of indifference fully asserted itself. The scribes, on the contrary, were the zealous champions of the integrity of the Law, and the upholders of all that was distinctive in Judaism. They were the life and soul of the popular resistance to paganism, which carried the nation safely through the dangers of the Greek period, in spite of the apostacy of the chief priests. It was the influence of their teaching which, at the most critical juncture of the people's history, called into existence the party whose heroic efforts saved Judaism from extinction. And later still, when we come to consider the permanent antagonism between the Pharisees and Sadducees, we shall find that the bulk of the scribes were included in the Pharisaic party, while the Sadducees were preeminently the party of the priests.

7. THE SAMARITANS (Neh. xiii. 28; Jos. Ant. xi. 8. 2-4). Nehemiah's second term of office as Governor of Judæa, which commenced in B.C. 433, was marked by an event whose far-reaching consequences could not be foreseen at the time when he recorded it. In contending against the evil of mixed marriages between Jews and aliens, he encountered

the most obstinate resistance from the High Priest Eliashib, whose grandson was married to a daughter of Sanballat, the Governor of Samaria. Refusing to give up his wife, the offender was banished from Jerusalem by Nehemiah's orders. We are not told what became of him afterwards, but it is natural to suppose that he took refuge with his father-in-law in Samaria. The sequel of the story is given, with some inaccuracies, in the pages of Josephus. We read there of a certain Manasseh, who was a *great*-grandson of Eliashib, and had married Nikaso, the daughter of the Samaritan governor Sanballat. Being required by the Jewish authorities either to divorce his wife or cease to exercise his priestly functions, Manasseh went over to the Samaritans, and was followed afterwards by other prominent Jews who were entangled with similar alliances. Sanballat received them with open arms, and undertook, with the permission of the Persian king, to erect a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, of which Manasseh should be the chief priest. But before the requisite permission could be obtained, Darius was defeated by Alexander the Great in the battle of Issus. Sanballat then transferred his allegiance to Alexander, and by his authority the new temple was built, and Manasseh was installed as the first high priest of the Samaritans. We can hardly doubt that this story is a garbled version of the incident so briefly related by Nehemiah. Josephus has placed it a hundred years too late. Perhaps he has confused two distinct facts—the organisation of the Samaritans as a religious community, and the erection of the famous temple on Gerizim. At all events, the probability is that the expulsion of Manasseh took place in the time of Nehemiah, and that it was followed by the secession of a number of malcontents, who rebelled against the high-handed measures by which the governor enforced submission to the law.

Thus the expulsion of this refractory priest proved to be one of the most important events in the early history of Judaism. In the first instance it was no doubt an immense advantage to the Jewish community. It marks the point at which the party who were opposed to the introduction of the law ceased to struggle against the spirit of legalism supported by the authority of the governor. When these men resolved to give up the contest and go over to the Samaritans, the triumph of Judaism was assured. But in its ultimate consequences their secession was by no means an unmixed blessing. It resulted, as we see from Josephus, in the formation of a rival sect, a spurious Judaism, which effectually prevented the extension of the Jewish system in the middle region of Palestine. Up to this time the Samaritans had not ventured to take up an attitude of religious rivalry to Judæa; they had probably never abandoned the hope of being received into the Jewish communion. In the time of Zerubbabel they professed to have sacrificed to Jehovah since the days of Esar-haddon, King of Assyria, which shows that they claimed no very high antiquity for their peculiar worship. Now, however, they found themselves in a position to establish a hierarchy and a sacrificial system of their own. The Pentateuch was introduced amongst them, probably by Manasseh himself, and with some necessary modifications, became the basis of a religious constitution closely resembling that of Jerusalem. Certain passages of the law could be interpreted as pointing to Mount Gerizim as the only legitimate centre of the worship of Jehovah, and there accordingly a temple was built. In course of time they came honestly to believe in themselves as the descendants of the Ten Tribes, and the true representatives of the ancient religion of Israel. The Jews of course treated these pretensions with the utmost contempt. They blamed the Samaritans for playing a double part with regard to

their religion: when the Jews were in favour, the Samaritans professed to be merely a section of the Jewish people, but when things went ill with the Jews, then they disowned all kinship and connection with them.[a] Whether that charge be well founded or not, it is certain that the bitterest hatred prevailed between the two races, and was kept alive by acts of cruelty on one side and the other, and never died out as long as the Jews retained a footing in their own land.

8. GALILEE AND PERÆA. Whilst the central district of Palestine was thus irrecoverably lost to Judaism, all the rest of the country seems to have been brought more or less completely within the sphere of its influence. In Galilee in the north, and Peræa (the ancient Gilead) on the east of the Jordan, there was, in the time of the Greek ascendency, a considerable Jewish population owning allegiance to the hierarchy at Jerusalem. By what means the Judaizing of these regions was effected, whether by colonisation and proselytism from Judæa, or by the return of Jews from Babylonia, cannot now be ascertained; but in all probability it must have been far advanced before the end of the Persian period. It must be borne in mind, however, that it was only a religious authority that the scribes and priests of Jerusalem exercised in Galilee and Peræa. Their political fortunes, which depended entirely on the arrangements made by the sovereign power, were in general more closely linked with those of Samaria than with those of Judæa. Only for a short time, in the most flourishing days of the Jewish state, did its political supremacy extend over the whole of Palestine. And it is a striking testimony to the superior vitality of Judaism that the Samaritan secession made no progress even in those remote provinces which had formerly belonged to the kingdom of the Ten Tribes.

[a] Jos. Ant. ix. 14. 3; xi. 8. 6; xii. 5. 5.

9. THE CLOSE OF THE PERSIAN PERIOD. The last century of the Persian Period is almost a complete blank in the history of Israel. Artaxerxes I., the friend and patron of Nehemiah, died in B.C. 424; and to all appearance he was the last Persian monarch who took a benevolent interest in the affairs of Judæa. The great Empire was fast hastening towards dissolution. Formidable insurrections broke out in various quarters; the court was a scene of treachery and murder, where members of the royal family contended by intrigue and assassination for the possession of the throne. The expedition of the "Ten Thousand" (c. B.C. 401) related in Xenophon's "Anabasis," first revealed to the Western world the military inferiority of the Persian armaments, and so prepared the way for the invasion of Alexander the Great, seventy years later. About the middle of the fourth century the Phœnicians and Cyprians allied themselves with the Egyptians in a vain attempt to shake off the Persian yoke. In this revolt, which was suppressed with great cruelty by Artaxerxes III., it is possible that the Jews may have somehow been implicated. At all events this king is known to have transported a large number of Jews to Hyrcania on the inhospitable shores of the Caspian Sea. Whatever may have been the reason for this harsh measure, it shows that the friendly relations which had once subsisted between the Jews and their Persian masters were entirely broken up, and that there were no ties of gratitude or loyal attachment to be severed when they were called on to take the oath of submission to Alexander the Great.

10. RESULTS OF THE PERSIAN PERIOD.—When we look back over the two hundred years of Persian rule, with their dearth of literary productions, their long intervals of utter silence, and their brief historical records of suffering and partial achievement, they seem on the whole to present a gloomy and disappointing retrospect. It is clear

that Israel can have had no stirring or elevating external history during these centuries. The high hopes of an era of Messianic glory and felicity which had been cherished at the close of the Exile, had been chilled by the hard realities of the struggle for national existence, and the steady, if not crushing, pressure of a foreign despotism. Deprived of the living voice of prophecy, the people, with no sure perception of a divine purpose ruling their present history, seem to have settled down into sullen acquiescence in their cheerless lot. The Book of Ecclesiastes, which is assigned by many critics to the latter part of this period, may be taken to reflect the feelings of an educated and thoughtful Jew of the time. Its tone of weariness and depression, its sense of stagnation, its glimpses of injustice, and misgovernment, and oppression, are all indications of a state of mind that would naturally arise in a people like Israel languishing under a long-continued and far-reaching tyranny. Yet it is often such dull and uneventful periods that leave the deepest marks on a nation's character. In the case of Israel, the enforced tranquillity of the Persian dominion made this one of the most fruitful periods in the history of Judaism. In the inner world of Jewish life an intense activity must have prevailed, the energy of the nation being fully absorbed in the work of assimilating the law, and applying it more and more closely to the regulation of social and religious duty. The great principle of holiness through separation became deeply rooted in the mind of the community, and the Jewish character gradually acquired the austere exclusiveness and devotion to the externals of religion, which ever afterwards excited the antipathy of the heathen world. The stirring events to be related in the next two chapters will show how solid and enduring were the results attained during the later years of the Persian era.

CHAPTER II.

THE GREEK PERIOD.

B.C. 333-167.

11. ALEXANDER THE GREAT. The overthrow of the Persian empire by Alexander the Great opens a new era in the history of the East. Crossing the Hellespont in B.C. 334, he first encountered and defeated the Persian generals on the banks of the Granicus. In the following year he won the decisive battle of Issus, near the north-east corner of the Mediterranean Sea. After subduing Phoenicia, Palestine, and Egypt, he marched into Mesopotamia, and again defeated Darius in the battle of Arbela (B.C. 331). These victories left him the undisputed master of the Persian empire, and when he died at Babylon in 323 his sway extended over the whole of Western Asia from the Nile to the Indus. But the real importance of Alexander's conquests lies in the fact that they opened up the East to the introduction of Greek civilisation. Alexander himself was fully alive to this higher aspect of his work. It was his conscious purpose to fuse together the various nationalities of his vast dominions into a new and homogeneous society, speaking the same language, and penetrated throughout by the spirit of Greece. And the policy which had been inaugurated by the great conqueror was followed more or less consistently by the powerful Macedonian nobles, who carved out kingdoms for themselves from the fragments of his empire after his death. The new cities which sprang up everywhere under these enlightened rulers were meant to be centres of Greek culture, and models of Greek institutions. Greek became the common language of the civilised world, and along with it, Greek ideas

and manners were gradually diffused amongst the mixed populations of the East. Of all these nations Israel alone had native vigour enough to struggle against the subtle and powerful attractions of the Greek ideal of life. Other nations, when once they had lost their political independence, had no great spiritual heritage to cling to. But the Jew had his religion, and its truths had been too deeply instilled into his mind to be lightly surrendered. The result was a long and painful conflict, which deepened in intensity as time went on, and reached its crisis one hundred and sixty years after Alexander's death. And it is this antagonism between the spirit of the old Hebrew religion and the foreign influences of the age that gives its peculiar interest and significance to the period of Jewish history on which we have now entered.

12. ALEXANDER AND THE JEWS (Jos. Ant. xi. 8. 5). Judæa and the neighbouring countries fell into the hands of Alexander, as we have seen, as the result of his victory at Issus (B.C. 333). Josephus tells us that the Jews at first refused to acknowledge his authority out of respect for their oath of allegiance to the King of Persia. After spending many months in besieging Tyre and Gaza, Alexander marched against Jerusalem to punish it for its obstinacy. Outside the city he was met by a procession of the inhabitants clothed in white, with the high priest, Jaddua, in his robes of office, at their head. This unexpected demonstration made an extraordinary impression on the king. Advancing alone to meet the high priest, he fell down before him and worshipped the God whose name was engraved on his mitre. When one of his officers remonstrated with him for such unnecessary self-abasement, he replied that long before, while he was meditating the conquest of Asia, that same venerable figure had appeared to him in a vision, and assured him of the success of his enterprise. He then entered

the city, we are told, where he offered a sacrifice in the temple under the directions of the high priest, and confirmed the Jews in all their privileges, especially the exemption from taxes in the sabbatical year. How much truth there may be in this story it is impossible to say, but it seems certain that the Jews were kindly treated by Alexander, and that the change of masters made very little difference in their condition. They paid their tribute to the Macedonian officials instead of the Persian, and for the rest things moved on quietly as before. We have not yet reached the true dawn of the Greek period.

13. THE WARS OF THE DIADOCHI. The early death of Alexander in 323 threw the affairs of the empire into the utmost confusion. The heir to the throne was yet unborn, and the real power necessarily passed into the hands of the great captains, who had served under Alexander, and are known in history as the Diadochi or Successors. At first an agreement was made to keep the empire together in the interests of Alexander's family, and the leading generals were sent to govern the different provinces as lieutenants. But this arrangement soon broke down on account of the ambitions and jealousies of these able and powerful soldiers. Ptolemy Lagi, who had been entrusted with the government of Egypt, immediately set about making it an independent kingdom for himself. Antigonus, one of the ablest of the Diadochi, not content with his own province, speedily made it clear that he aimed at bringing the whole empire under his sway; and in this he seems very nearly to have succeeded. Thus for twenty years the world was disturbed by incessant wars, into the confused history of which we need not enter here.[a] It is sufficient to say that at

[a] For fuller information on the events of this time, and on the diffusion of Greek civilisation in the East, the student should consult Professor Mahaffy's work on "Alexander's Empire" (T. Fisher Unwin, 1887).

the battle of Ipsus, in B.C. 301, Antigonus was finally crushed by a coalition of four other generals, who had previously agreed to divide the empire of Alexander between themselves. Of these four the only two with whom we have any further concern are Ptolemy Lagi and Seleucus. Ptolemy retained possession of Egypt, and received in addition part of the Mediterranean coast, including Palestine. Seleucus received part of Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, Babylonia, and the whole of the East. Since he fixed his capital near the western extremity of his dominions, his kingdom was henceforth known as Syria. Lying on the high road between these two great monarchies, Judæa was constantly exposed to invasion in their frequent wars, and its possession continued to be disputed between them for the next one hundred and thirty years.[a]

14. THE JEWISH DISPERSION. From the very beginning of the Greek Period, large numbers of Jews were induced to settle in the new Egyptian capital of Alexandria, which rapidly rose to be the foremost city in the world. They were attracted thither partly by the rights of citizenship, which had been conferred on them by Alexander the Great at the foundation of the city, and partly by their own natural aptitude for business affairs. Under the wise administration of the early Ptolemies the number of Jewish colonists steadily increased, and a special quarter of the city was assigned to them. There they not only enjoyed equal rights with the dominant Greek population, but they were governed in civil matters by their own magistrates, and were allowed the free exercise of all their religious customs. Alexandria thus became the chief centre of what is known as the Dispersion,

a The history of these two kingdoms down to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes is dimly outlined in Daniel xi., where Egypt is referred to as the Kingdom of the South, and Syria as the Kingdom of the North.

i.e., the Jews scattered abroad among the heathen, in active intercourse with them, but prevented from mingling with them by the powerful bond of religion. A similar process went on in Syria, where Seleucus I. had planted Jewish colonies in the new cities which he founded, especially in his capital of Antioch on the Orontes. From these centres, and from the Holy Land itself, the stream of Jewish emigration poured forth along the great trade routes of the empire, and in course of time the Jews of the Dispersion were to be found in all the countries of the civilised world. It was inevitable that amongst the Jews living abroad there should be developed a type of Judaism somewhat different from that which prevailed in Palestine, and this was especially the case with the cultured Jews of Alexandria. Yet in all essential respects they remained faithful to their religious traditions, and always felt themselves to be one with their brethren at home. By the regular payment of the temple tribute, and frequent pilgrimages to the feasts at Jerusalem, they kept up constant communication with the mother-country, and thus imparted a strength and prestige to Jerusalem, as their religious metropolis, similar to that which Rome has so long enjoyed as the centre of Catholic Christianity.

15. THE SEPTUAGINT. The existence of so many Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria and elsewhere made a Greek translation of the Old Testament almost indispensable. The first impulse to the work seems, however, to have been given by Ptolemy (II.) Philadelphus (B.C. 284-247), who wished to place a copy of the Jewish law, written in Greek, in the great library of Alexandria. According to the Jewish legend he sent an embassy to the High Priest at Jerusalem to obtain an authentic copy of the Books of Moses and the services of competent translators. The work of translation was said to have been performed by

seventy (or seventy-two) Jewish scholars; hence the name Septuagint or LXX. The remaining books of the Old Testament were translated at various times to meet the wants of the Jewish community of Alexandria, and the whole was completed certainly before the middle of the second century B.C. Whatever may have been the exact circumstances of its origin, the new version was universally adopted by Greek-speaking Jews throughout the world, and came to be regarded with almost as much veneration as the Hebrew original itself.

16. JUDÆA UNDER THE PTOLEMIES.—Under the first three Ptolemies the yoke of Egyptian supremacy lay very lightly on the Jews of Palestine. The civil and spiritual authority were still united in the person of the High Priest, with whom, however, there was now associated a *Gerousia*, or Supreme Council of Elders, in the administration of the state.[a] Two High Priests of this period are specially mentioned as having worthily upheld the best traditions of their office—Simon the Just at the beginning, and Simon II. at the close, of the third century. The latter is said to have repaired the walls of Jerusalem, fortified the temple, and adorned the city with many splendid buildings.[b] The authority of the Ptolemies was chiefly exercised in the imposition of taxes, and so long as these were regularly paid, the Jews were allowed to manage their internal affairs for themselves. In the reign of Ptolemy (III.) Euergetes (247-222), a change in the system of taxation was introduced, which seriously diminished the influence of the high priest, and gave rise to many

a The origin of this council, which afterwards developed into the Sanhedrin, is one of the many obscure points in Jewish history. It is possible that some such court may have existed during the Persian period. But in any case the institution of a supreme council, with judicial and administrative functions, must have been due to the extension of local self-government which was favoured by the early Greek rulers. The Gerousia is first mentioned in a decree of Antiochus the Great, about the year 202 (Jos. Ant., xii. 3. 3.)

b Ecclus. l. 1-20.

disorders in the Jewish state. It came about in this way. The high priest, Onias II., had incurred the displeasure of the king by foolishly withholding the yearly tribute of twenty talents for which he was responsible. A nephew of Onias, named Joseph, the son of Tobias, saw in this complication an opportunity to advance his own interests, and offered to settle the matter by a mission to the Egyptian court. He succeeded probably beyond his own expectations. By his ready wit and pleasing manners, as well as by rich presents, he so ingratiated himself with the king and queen, that he was appointed Farmer-general of taxes for the whole of Palestine and Coele-Syria. He kept this position for twenty-two years, to the great profit of his royal master and himself. Supported by a body of Egyptian troops, he committed several acts of wholesale plunder on cities lying outside of Judæa, and acted generally in such a tyrannical manner that he had no difficulty in raising a larger revenue from his district than any of his predecessors had done. By his great wealth and influence he became the head of a powerful and turbulent faction in Judæa, which set the regular authority of the high priests completely at defiance. After his death his youngest son Hyrcanus, who outshone his father in the arts of flattery and dissimulation, was embroiled in a feud with his seven brothers, and was compelled to take refuge on the other side of the Jordan. But the party of the sons of Tobias remained a standing danger to the public peace long after the Egyptian dominion in Palestine had come to an end.[a]

17. PROGRESS OF HELLENISM IN JUDÆA. Meanwhile certain sections of the Jewish nation were being completely carried away by the current of Greek civilisation. By this time Judæa was almost surrounded by a belt of Greek towns, some of them founded, others merely restored, by the enter-

[a] Jos. Ant., xii. 4.

prise of Greek or Macedonian settlers.[a] Where cities of this kind abounded, as along the sea coast, the country was completely Hellenised, which means that every department of life, from religious worship and political institutions down to the most familiar social customs, was moulded by the prevailing Greek spirit. Although none of these towns were found within strictly Judæan territory, they were near enough to give the Jews many glimpses of a life of refinement and pleasure very different from that to which they had been accustomed. Besides, they were compelled in the way of trade to hold constant intercourse with the Greek districts, and it was almost impossible to prevent some foreign usages from making their way into Judæa. Hence it is not surprising that a movement in favour of Greek liberty of thought and manners began to spread amongst the upper classes. Some, attracted by the free, voluptuous life of the heathen cities, boldly abandoned the profession of Judaism, and endeavoured to live as like the Greeks as possible. Others, without going so far as to renounce their religion, nevertheless broke through many of the restraints which the law imposed on free intercourse with foreigners. That the influence of the Tobias party told powerfully in this direction we may infer from the character of Joseph himself, whose life was stained by some of the worst vices of heathenism. On the other hand, a reaction in favour of the strict observance of the Law set in amongst the better part of the nation, who perceived the moral and religious corruption that lay under the fair surface of Greek culture; while the lower orders were to a large extent protected from the influx of paganism by their ignorance of the Greek language. Never-

a The most important of these were *Gaza*, *Azotus* (Ashdod), *Ptolemais* (Accho, the modern Acre), along the coast; *Samaria*, in the middle of the country; *Scythopolis* (Bethshan), *Pella*, and *Paneas* (identical with the ancient Dan, or near it), in the north.

theless the tide of Hellenism flowed steadily in upon the Jews till it was checked by the outbreak of the Maccabæan insurrection, when it appeared that the great mass of the people were on the side of those who remained faithful to the Law.

18. WARS OF EGYPT AND SYRIA (Dan. xi. 5-12; Jos. Ant. xii. 3. 3). During all this time the possession of Palestine was the object of ceaseless wars and intrigues between the kings of Egypt and Syria. Ptolemy Philadelphus conducted the war by subsidizing his allies in Asia Minor and Greece to do his fighting for him, so that during his life Palestine was not the scene of military operations. But just at the time of his death an event occurred which sent a thrill of horror through men's minds even in that age of violence, and caused the enmity between the two kingdoms to burst out with greater fury than ever. This was the murder of Berenice, the daughter of Philadelphus, who had been given in marriage to Antiochus II. of Syria on the conclusion of a treaty of peace. She had scarcely reached her new home when she was foully murdered at Daphne, near Antioch (B.C. 246).[a] To avenge her death, her brother Ptolemy Euergetes invaded Syria at the head of a large army, and but for troubles which recalled him to Egypt, would probably have completely subdued it. As it was, he tightened his hold on his outlying possessions by leaving a garrison in Seleucia, the port of Antioch. Things continued in this position till Antiochus (III.) the Great [223-187] ascended the throne of Syria, and Euergetes was succeeded by the worthless and indolent Ptolemy (IV.) Philopator [221-204]. As soon as he was free to do so, Antiochus marched southwards and overran Palestine as far as Gaza, when at length the slothful Philopator got ready an army and inflicted a heavy defeat on him at Raphia, near Gaza (B.C. 217). Antiochus was then compelled to agree to a treaty

[a] Dan. xi. 6.

which left matters almost as they were before the war.

19. FINAL CONQUEST OF PALESTINE BY SYRIA (Dan. xi. 13-17; Jos. Ant. xii. 4. 1). In the year B.C. 203 Antiochus, acting in concert with the King of Macedon, took advantage of the youth of Ptolemy (V.) Epiphanes [204-181], to renew his attack upon Egypt through Palestine. On this occasion he found the Jews thoroughly disaffected towards the Egyptian government, on account of cruelties perpetrated by Philopator on the Alexandrian Jews. They accordingly rendered every possible assistance to Antiochus, and were rewarded by liberal concessions to the temple at Jerusalem, and the offer of many new privileges to the city.[a] Antiochus, however, was again expelled from Palestine by the Egyptian general, Scopas, and Jerusalem suffered severely for its disloyalty. But at length in B.C. 198, Scopas was defeated in a great battle at Paneas, near the sources of the Jordan. This victory decided the fate of Palestine. Judæa was quickly cleared of Egyptian troops, and Antiochus was on the point of carrying the war into Egypt itself, when all his plans were suddenly checked by a threatening message from the Romans, who had resolved to take the young Ptolemy under their protection. Antiochus made the best of a difficult situation, by proposing a marriage of his daughter Cleopatra with the young King of Egypt, and offering to pay over the revenue of Palestine as part of her dowry. On these terms peace was concluded, and so the Jews passed under the dominion of the King of Syria. It is true that on the death of Cleopatra, about twenty-five years later, the Egyptians tried to assert their claim to the possession of Palestine, but this only led to a renewal of hostilities, from which Egypt reaped no advantage.

20. JUDÆA UNDER THE SELEUCIDÆ (Dan.

[a] Jos. Ant. xii. 3. 3.

xi. 18-20). We have seen that the Jews, or at least a large party amongst them, had gladly welcomed the prospect of being incorporated in the Syrian kingdom. A subject nation is always apt to expect some advantage from a change of masters. Moreover, the lavish promises of Antiochus the Great during the war, and his known favour for the Jews of Babylonia, seemed to warrant the hope that he would at all events prove a more lenient sovereign than a Ptolemy Philopator. If Antiochus had been in a position to keep his engagements, it is probable that these expectations might in some measure have been realised. But soon after his occupation of the country, he experienced a reverse of fortune, which threw all the affairs of the Syrian monarchy out of joint, and made generous treatment of its subjects impossible. The Romans, who had just come victoriously out of their long struggle with Carthage, had now a free hand in the East, and they could not resist the temptation to interfere in the quarrels of the petty kingdoms of Asia. Through circumstances which it is unnecessary to relate, Antiochus came into collision with them, and was defeated and ruined in the battle of Magnesia (B.C. 190). A heavy military indemnity for twelve years was imposed on him, and he was compelled to send his second son, Antiochus, as a hostage to Rome in security for its payment. The kings of Syria never recovered from the financial embarrassment into which they were thus plunged. In order to fill their exhausted treasury, they were driven to the desperate expedient of robbing temples within their own territory. Antiochus himself lost his life in an attempt of this kind, near the head of the Persian Gulf, in B.C. 187.

21. THE FIRST ATTEMPT ON THE TEMPLE TREASURES (2 Mac. iii.). It was not long before the attention of Seleucus IV. [187-176], the son and successor of Antiochus the Great, was directed to

the wealth treasured up in the Temple at Jerusalem. A Benjamite named Simon, belonging to the party of the sons of Tobias, had a long-standing quarrel with the high priest Onias III. This man, apparently from sheer malice, went to Apollonius, the governor of Coele-Syria, and urged him to plunder the temple of the vast sums of money which he alleged to be deposited there beyond what had been collected for religious purposes. When Seleucus heard of this he sent his minister, Heliodorus, to Jerusalem, to inquire as to the truth of this report, and to confiscate any treasure he might find in the temple. In spite of the protests of the high priest and the entreaties of the people, Heliodorus determined to force his way into the sanctuary, but there he is said to have been struck to the ground by a company of angels, and to have owed his life to the intercession of the high priest. Simon had meanwhile gone to Antioch, where he persistently slandered Onias, and sought by every means in his power to prejudice the king against him. His partisans stirred up so many disturbances in Jerusalem that Onias himself was compelled to proceed to the Syrian court in order to get the dispute settled. While he was there (in B.C. 176), Seleucus was murdered by Heliodorus, who hoped to secure the throne for himself. But soon after Antiochus, the brother of the late king, returned from Rome, and obtained the kingdom, the lawful heir, Demetrius, having just taken his place as a hostage at Rome.[a]

22. ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES. (Dan. xi. 21-24). Under this king—surnamed Epiphanes (the Brilliant) by his flatterers, but by the common people Epimanes (the Madman)—the long conflict between Judaism and Hellenism entered upon a new phase, and was quickly brought to a crisis. Hitherto the Jews, amidst all their misfortunes, had enjoyed complete

[a] Dan. xi. 20, 21.

toleration in the observance of their own religion. But Epiphanes, who had learned many bad lessons during his twelve years' sojourn in Rome, determined to establish the Greek idolatry as a state religion, and to enforce conformity to it throughout his dominions. In Judæa his measures met with stubborn resistance, and he conceived in consequence a bitter hatred of the whole Jewish race, a hatred which was aggravated by the misfortunes of his latter years. It is perhaps some excuse for him that he knew the Jewish character only on its worst side. From the first he gave his confidence to members of the Greek party, who were labouring with all their might to destroy everything that was distinctive in Judaism. These men assured him that Judæa was ripe for the introduction of heathenism, and lent themselves as willing instruments to carry out the king's wishes. He did not discover till it was too late the tenacious strength of the people he had to deal with, and the sacrifices it was capable of making for its sacred institutions. But nothing can palliate the savage cruelty with which, after his mistake was clear, he persisted in the endeavour to coerce the Jews into submission to his will. Regardless of every consideration of justice and humanity, meeting opposition with ever severer measures of repression, he blindly adhered to the policy of blood and iron, till at last the long-suffering nation was driven into open revolt, and faced his armies on the field of battle.

23. THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER (2 Mac. iv. 7-50; Jos. Ant. xii. 5. 1). At the beginning of the reign of Epiphanes, the head of the Greek party in Jerusalem was a brother of the high priest, who had exchanged his Hebrew name Joshua for the Greek Jason. In spite of his Greek proclivities, he had been entrusted by Onias III. with the management of affairs during the absence of the latter in Antioch.

Jason, however, followed him thither, and endeavoured to obtain the High-priesthood for himself in return for a large yearly tribute. Antiochus at once closed with the offer, conferred the priesthood on Jason, and detained Onias in Antioch. He also granted Jason permission to erect a gymnasium after the Greek fashion in Jerusalem, and very soon devout Jews were scandalised by seeing the exercises of the Grecian games practised by naked Jewish youths under the very walls of the Temple. Even the priests were carried away by the prevailing fashion, and forsaking the service of the altar, threw themselves eagerly into these shameless pastimes. But Jason had only held office for about three years, when another blow was struck at the integrity of Jewish institutions. Menelaus, a member of the Tobias party, who did not even belong to the tribe of Levi, offered 300 talents a year more than Jason for the High-priesthood, and was forthwith installed as his successor (B.C. 171). Jason was compelled to take refuge beyond the Jordan. Menelaus, however, found himself quite unable to meet his money obligations to the king, and to extricate himself from his difficulties he began to pilfer the temple treasury. With the money thus obtained he bribed various persons of influence at the Syrian court. By this means he procured the assassination of Onias at Daphne,[a] and, in the same way, when he was accused before the king by three elders from the council at Jerusalem, he contrived to get them executed and to recover his liberty. In the meantime, his repeated acts of sacrilege on the temple had provoked an insurrection in Jerusalem, in which a bloody conflict took place between the populace and the royal troops who had been placed at the disposal of this renegade High Priest.

24. THE EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGNS OF EPIPHANES (Dan. xi. 25-30; 1 Mac. i. 16-28; 2 Mac.

a See Dan. xi. 22.

v. 1-23; Jos. Ant. xii. 5. 2, 3). From B.C. 171 to 168, Antiochus was engaged in a series of campaigns against Egypt, in the course of which he noted several symptoms of the hatred which his conduct had produced amongst the Jews. During his second campaign a report spread in Palestine that the tyrant was dead, and Jason immediately returned with an armed force to Jerusalem. The bulk of the population being on his side, he entered the city and slew many of the adherents of Menelaus; but the priest himself held out in the citadel till the arrival of Antiochus, when Jason was once more driven into exile. Antiochus punished this outbreak with merciless severity. He let loose his soldiers on the unfortunate city, and after an indiscriminate massacre of the inhabitants, he entered the temple along with Menelaus, and carried off all its remaining treasures and all the sacred vessels. Two years later (B.C. 168) the war with Egypt was abruptly stopped by the same power that had crossed his father's path thirty years before. Popilius Lænas, the Roman ambassador, met him near Alexandria, and commanded him to desist for ever from his designs on Egypt. Antiochus tried hard to gain time, but the ambassador was inexorable; drawing a circle round him on the sand where he stood, he demanded an answer before he left the spot. Antiochus knew the Romans too well to defy them, and at once promised all that was required of him. He then retired in sullen wrath to Antioch, resolved to take a fearful vengeance on the hapless Jews.

25. DESECRATION OF THE TEMPLE — JUDAISM SUPPRESSED BY FORCE (Dan. xi. 31; 1 Mac. i. 29-59; 2 Mac. v. 24-26; Jos. Ant. xii. 5. 4). The king entrusted the execution of his plans in Judæa to his general, Apollonius, whom he sent to Jerusalem with a large army towards the end of the year 168. When the Sabbath came round the soldiers suddenly fell on the defenceless inhabit-

ants and slaughtered a great multitude of them, while many of the women and children were sold into slavery. The walls were broken down and the temple laid waste, though not destroyed; and Jerusalem, deserted by all but the apostate party of Menelaus, assumed the appearance of a heathen city. About this time also the citadel of Akra, which played so important a part in the subsequent history, seems to have been erected, probably on the western side of the Tyropoeon Valley, overlooking the Temple Mount. Apollonius then proceeded to carry out his instructions for the forcible suppression of the Jewish religion, and the establishment of idolatry in its place. The temple was to be desecrated, and dedicated to the service of the Olympian Jupiter. An altar to this god was erected on the top of the great altar of burnt-offering, and on this altar,[a] on the 25th of the month Chisleu (December), the first heathen sacrifice was offered. Similar altars were set up in the towns and villages of Judæa, and at these the people were compelled to sacrifice; while all the distinctive observances of Judaism, such as circumcision, the keeping of the Sabbath, and abstinence from unclean food, were prohibited on pain of death.

26. THE CHASIDIM (Dan. xi. 32-35; 1 Mac. i. 44-64; 2 Mac. vi., vii.). The persecution that followed, though of short duration, rose to a fearful height of violence and cruelty. Commissioners were appointed to visit the country districts, and see that the royal decrees were duly observed. Cases of disobedience were carefully searched out and punished with scourging or death. Women who had allowed their sons to be circumcised were strangled, with their infants hung from their necks; copies of the Law were destroyed or defaced wherever they were found, and their possessors put to death. The first effect of the persecution was to draw a sharp line of

a The "abomination of desolation." See Dan. ix. 27; 1 Mac. i. 54.

division between those who were faithful to the Law, and those who were lukewarm or indifferent. And when neutrality became impossible, and each man was compelled to declare himself on one side or the other, it was found that a very large number were prepared to suffer anything rather than abandon the faith of their fathers. The spirit of the better part of the nation was only nerved to a more heroic endurance, and inflamed with a more ardent devotion to the national religion. It was during the troubles of this period that the faithful supporters of the Law first banded themselves together in a secret league for the defence of the sacred observances which were threatened with extinction. They were known by the honourable name of the *Chasidim*, or Pious.[a] They were in no sense a political party. They did not aim at liberating their country from the yoke of the Syrian dominion; they only strove for freedom to worship God and live according to the Law. At first they had no thought of taking up arms in defence of their rights, but retired to caves and secret places in the wilderness to await the providential issue of events. So strict was their adherence to the letter of the Law, that a large body of them, surprised in their retreat by royal troops, allowed themselves to be murdered to a man rather than lift a hand in self-defence on the Sabbath day.[b] They felt that they were living in the last days, and looked for deliverance not to any arm of flesh, but to the direct interposition of God Himself. In the midst of their sorrows they turned for comfort to the Book of Daniel—a book which, at whatever time it was written, has certainly a very special bearing on the circumstances of this dark and eventful period. Their courage was sustained and their hearts were

a In the first book of Maccabees we read of the "Synagogue" of the Chasidim, which shows that the defenders of the law had formed some kind of voluntary association amongst themselves.

b 1 Mac. ii. 31-38.

cheered by its noble examples of Jewish constancy in bygone days; by its predictions of the downfall of the brute kingdoms of this world; and the bringing in of the kingdom of everlasting righteousness; above all, by its clear announcement of the doctrine of the resurrection, which, from this time, held a place in the minds of true believers in Israel such as it had never had before.

27. A JEWISH TEMPLE IN EGYPT (Jos. Ant. xiii. 3. 1-3). So desperate did the situation of Judaism appear to be at this time that one man at least conceived the bold idea of removing the seat of the national worship from Jerusalem to Egypt. Onias III., the High Priest who was murdered at Daphne in 171, left behind him a son, Onias IV., who placed himself under the protection of Ptolemy Philometor, the King of Egypt. It is not surprising that the representative of the house of Zadok should have considered the locality of the sanctuary of less consequence than the legitimacy of the priesthood; and accordingly Onias, seeing no prospect of being restored to his rights at Jerusalem, resolved to found a new temple in the land of his adoption. Near the city of Leontopolis, in the district of Heliopolis, he had observed an old Egyptian temple that had fallen into decay. A passage in the book of Isaiah [a] seemed to him to sanction the erection of an altar to Jehovah at this place, and he applied to Ptolemy and his queen for leave to build there a temple after the pattern of that of Jerusalem. The permission was not granted till about the year 160, so that we are anticipating somewhat the course of events. In the next chapter we shall see that at that time the temple at Jerusalem had been purified, and was again presided over by a descendant of Aaron. Onias, however, persisted in his project, built his temple, and obtained a sufficient number of priests

a Is. xix. 18, 19. In v. 18, instead of "city of destruction," many copies have "city of the Sun" (Heliopolis).

and Levites to carry on the services. With the complete triumph of the legal party in Judæa which speedily followed, the necessity for the Egyptian temple disappeared. But the kings of Egypt were not sorry to do something to check the flow of money to Palestine in the shape of religious offerings from their Jewish subjects, and supported the worship of the new temple by every means in their power. And although Leontopolis proved a very insignificant rival to Jerusalem, it continued to be more or less frequented by the Egyptian Jews till after the time of Christ. What became ultimately of the descendants of Onias we do not know. It is certain that they never regained their ancient position as the heads of the Jewish hierarchy.

CHAPTER III.

THE MACCABEES.

B.C. 167-135.

28. **THE OUTBREAK OF THE REVOLT** (B.C. 167) (1 Mac. ii.; Jos. Ant. xii. 6). Things had come to such a pass in Judæa that a single spark was sufficient to kindle the flame of rebellion throughout the country. In the little town of Modein, about eighteen miles N.W. of Jerusalem, there was living at this time an aged priest named Mattathias, who had retired from Jerusalem, in deep distress at the miseries of his people. In course of time Apelles, one of the royal commissioners, came to the village and assembled the inhabitants for the purpose of celebrating a heathen sacrifice. Mattathias, as the most influential person in the community, was first

directed to set the example of submission to the king's authority. This he promptly and firmly declined to do. At this moment another Jew stepped forward to offer sacrifice, when Mattathias, carried away by a sudden impulse, rushed on him, and with his own hand slew him on the altar. In the tumult that followed Apelles was killed, the altar was thrown down, and Mattathias and his sons, calling on all who were zealous for the Law and faithful to the covenant to follow them, fled to the mountains. The news of this bold deed spread quickly over the country, and great numbers of the Chasidim and others who had fled from persecution, came out of their hiding-places and rallied round Mattathias. Under his guidance an irregular but vigorous crusade against idolatry was organized, and the daily increasing band of insurgents speedily became the terror of the apostates in all places beyond the protection of a Syrian garrison. Carefully avoiding a conflict with the royal forces, they made sudden descents and night attacks on undefended towns and villages, where they overthrew heathen altars, and enforced the observance of circumcision and other Jewish usages as required by the Law. Soon after the outbreak of the revolt Mattathias died, leaving the control of the movement in the hands of his five noble sons, of whom in his dying charge he designated Simon as the wisest in council, and Judas as the ablest leader in war.

29. JUDAS MACCABÆUS (1 Mac. iii. 1-26; 2 Mac. viii. 1-7; Jos. Ant. xii. 7. 1). The wonderful success which attended the next stages of the revolt was mainly due, under God, to the character and military genius of Judas Maccabæus,[a] from whose surname it was that his followers received their common designation of Maccabees. In him the

a The meaning of the name is obscure. According to one derivation it signifies the "Hammerer," according to a more recent one, the "Extinguisher."

party of the faithful had found a leader of the noblest type, a true hero and patriot, such as had not arisen in Israel since the days of David and Jonathan. Along with the skill and caution of a thorough general he possessed that strange power of infusing courage into others which marks the born commander of men. Like David, too, he was sustained by a lofty confidence in God, which never failed him in the darkest hours of his life, but led him again and again to the most surprising victories over overwhelming odds. For a time his operations were confined to the system of irregular warfare and night attacks which had been commenced under his father. His first skirmish with regular soldiers was in the year 166, when he cut in pieces a detachment that was advancing against him from Samaria under the general Apollonius. A little later in the same year, Seron, another Syrian general, having collected a larger force in the extreme north of Palestine, marched into Judæa; but Judas caught him in the pass of Beth-horon, and defeated him with the loss of 800 men. These successes inspired the Maccabees with the most enthusiastic confidence in their leader, and the fame of Judas spread far and wide among the surrounding nations.

30. THE BATTLE OF EMMAUS (B.C. 166). (1 Mac. iii. 27—iv. 25; 2 Mac. viii. 8-29; Jos. Ant. xii. 7. 2-4). When the news of these events reached Antiochus Epiphanes, he was beside himself with rage, and determined in his fury to destroy the Jewish nation from the face of the earth. Owing to the exhausted state of his treasury he seems to have had considerable difficulty in raising an army sufficient for his purpose. As some of his Eastern provinces were withholding their tribute, he divided his forces into two parts; and leaving one half with his relative Lysias to suppress the insurrection in Judæa, he himself led the other half against the rebels in the East. Lysias accordingly sent an

army of 40,000 foot and 7000 horse [a] into Judæa under these experienced generals, Ptolemæus, Nicanor, and Gorgias. They marched south by way of the sea coast, and encamped at Emmaus, half way between Joppa and Jerusalem. So sure were they of victory that their camp was thronged with Phœnician slave-dealers, who had come to buy the numerous captives that they expected to take. The army of Judas was assembled meanwhile at the ancient sanctuary of Mizpah, a few miles north of Jerusalem. There they prepared for the coming conflict by observing a day of humiliation and prayer, when they spread out before the Lord the defaced books of the Law, the unused priestly garments, the tithes and offerings they had collected but could not bring into the temple, crying, What shall we do with these, and whither shall we carry them away? As soon as Judas had completed his arrangements, he marched westward and took up a position to the south of the enemy's camp. Having learned that Gorgias had planned a night attack on him with 6000 men, he broke up his camp under cover of darkness, and leaving Gorgias to search for him in the mountains, he appeared at daybreak with his whole force (3000 men) in front of the main body of the enemy, and awaited their attack. In the engagement that ensued the Jews were completely victorious, and after scattering the Syrians, set fire to their camp. When the column of Gorgias emerged from the mountains, and saw the camp on fire and the Jewish host drawn up in battle-array, they, too, fled in disorder without striking a blow, and the small army of Judas returned home with songs of triumph and thanksgiving for their wonderful deliverance.

31. THE PURIFICATION OF THE TEMPLE

a The numbers throughout are taken from the first book of Maccabees. They are almost the only point on which that excellent historical work is open to the suspicion of inaccuracy.

(1 Mac. iv. 28-61 ; 2 Mac. x. 1-8 ; Jos. Ant. xii. 7. 5-7). In the following year (165) Lysias despatched a still larger army of 65,000 men against Judas. This time they avoided the scene of so many disasters by marching down the eastern side of the Jordan and round the south end of the Dead Sea, so as to enter Judæa from the south. But Judas, whose followers now numbered 10,000, met them at Beth-zur on the Idumæan frontier (about five miles north of Hebron), and again inflicted a crushing defeat upon them. Judas now resolved to capture Jerusalem, the only place still held by Syrian troops. He took possession of the Temple mountain without difficulty, and converted it into a strong fortress. The garrison was cooped up within the citadel of Akra, and invested as closely as possible, but the place was found too strong to be taken by assault. The sanctuary was then sedulously purified, the polluted altar was removed, and a new one of unhewn stone erected in its place ; new utensils were provided, and the ancient order of the temple service was restored in accordance with the Law. On the 25th of Chisleu, exactly three years from the day that the first heathen sacrifice was offered, the feast of the dedication of the altar commenced, and was kept up with great rejoicing for eight days. This was the origin of the feast of the Dedication, [a] which was observed for eight days every year as long as the temple stood, in commemoration of this joyful event.

32. DEATH OF ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES (1 Mac. v. 1—vi. 16 ; 2 Mac. ix., xii.; Jos. Ant. xii. 8. 1—9. 1). The year 164 was spent by Judas and his brethren in a series of campaigns against the countries round about Judæa. The tremendous energy which the small Jewish army had been able to put forth in its struggles with Syria, excited the alarm of the surrounding nations, so that the Jews

[a] See John x. 22.

residing beyond the limits of Judæa were in constant danger of massacre at the hands of their heathen neighbours. Urgent messages for succour were received from the Jews in Galilee and Gilead, and it was decided to send two expeditions, one under Simon and the other under Judas himself, to their relief. After much hard fighting these Jews were rescued and brought in safety to Judæa. Judas also made an incursion into the southern portion of the old kingdom of Judah, now held by the Idumæans, where he dismantled the fortress of Hebron. Then turning westward into the Philistine country he ravaged the territory of Ashdod and destroyed their idols and altars. But the most important event of the year was the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, which occurred as he was returning from his eastern expedition. He lived just long enough to hear of the complete failure of all his plans in Judæa. According to the Jewish historian, his last hours were embittered and his end was hastened by remorse for the crimes he had committed against the Jews; and so he "perished through great grief in a strange land."

33. JUDAS DEFEATED BY LYSIAS (1 Mac. vi. 17-63; Jos. Ant. xii. 9. 2-7). The death of Epiphanes left the Syrian government free to adopt a more conciliatory policy towards the Jews. It seems that at least one voice[a] in the royal council was raised against persisting in the foolish projects of the late king, and in favour of justice and toleration. Lysias, however, who was now regent and guardian of the young king, Antiochus (V.) Eupator, was not disposed to come to terms with victorious rebels; especially as the Syrians in the citadel of Jerusalem were being hard pressed by Judas, and were sending piteous entreaties for help. He therefore resolved to make one more supreme effort to quell the insurrection by force. Taking the young king with

[a] Ptolemy Macron (2 Mac. x. 12, 13).

him he marched at the head of 120,000 men by the south of the Dead Sea, and laid siege to Beth-zur, which was now occupied by a Jewish garrison. Judas was obliged to raise the siege of Akra, and go to meet this formidable army at Beth-zechariah, a few miles from Beth-zur. But the huge Syrian host swept everything before it, and advanced without further opposition to Jerusalem, where it relieved the citadel, and besieged the Jews in the Temple fortifications. As it was the Sabbath year, both the beleaguered garrisons were badly victualled, and that of Beth-zur was soon forced to capitulate. The Temple mount was also reduced to the last extremity, when tidings reached Lysias which necessitated his immediate return to Antioch. A treaty was hastily concluded, which guaranteed to the Jews perfect freedom in all matters of worship and religion, and on this condition the Temple fortress was surrendered.

34. APPOINTMENT OF AN AARONIC HIGH PRIEST (2 Mac. xiii. 1-8; Jos. Ant. xii. 9. 7). The treaty with Lysias marks an important turning-point in the struggle for independence. The concession of religious liberty covered all that the Maccabees had originally taken up arms for; and it is to be noted that amidst all the subsequent vacillations of Syrian policy this concession appears never to have been formally revoked. It is true that many of the Maccabees were now resolved to fight till they had won their political independence; but a large number, including probably all the Chasidim, had no further motive for prolonging the conflict. Another event which tended to pave the way for a peaceable settlement was the execution of the apostate High-Priest Menelaus, who was too deeply identified with the policy of Epiphanes to be spared. Lysias perceived that there was no hope of peace in Judæa so long as he was alive, and recommended the young king to have him put to death. This was accordingly done, and in his room Alcimus,

a descendant of Aaron, though not a member of the last High-Priestly family, was appointed High-Priest. These arrangements would probably have satisfied the party of the Law; and if Alcimus had only acted with discretion and forbearance, the Jews might have settled down once more as peaceable vassals of the Syrian kingdom.

35. RENEWAL OF HOSTILITIES (1 Mac. vii.; 2 Mac. xiv., xv.; Jos. Ant. xii. 10. 1-5). But in the meantime (B.C. 162), Demetrius, the elder brother of Epiphanes and the rightful heir to the throne, had been released from Rome,[a] and having killed Antiochus Eupator and Lysias, took possession of the kingdom, under the title of Demetrius I. (Soter). Alcimus, who was not succeeding in Judæa, soon appeared at his court, begging for aid, and representing the absolute necessity of getting rid of Judas Maccabæus and his faction. The new king listened to his story and sent one of his generals, Bacchides, with an army to support the cause of Alcimus, and to endeavour, by fair means or foul, to secure the person of Judas. In spite of these ominous arrangements, the Chasidim, who had hitherto fought side by side with the champions of national independence, were the first to tender their allegiance to the High Priest; and but for the vindictiveness of Alcimus they might have been permanently detached from the national cause. But when he (or Bacchides) treacherously seized and executed sixty of their leading men, they took alarm; and after Bacchides had left the country, Judas once more bestirred himself. It is plain that his following had been much reduced by recent events, for he did not for some time venture on a pitched battle with the Syrian forces. Nevertheless his bold and rapid movements struck such terror into the hearts of the apostate party, that Alcimus was again forced to quit Jerusalem and betake himself to Antioch. Demetrius then sent a

[a] See p. 35.

fresh army under Nicanor, who first tried unsuccessfully to entrap Judas at a conference to which he had invited him. He then attacked the Jewish army at a place called Caphar-salama, but was defeated; and in a second battle at Beth-horon he was killed and his army annihilated.

36. DEATH OF JUDAS MACCABÆUS (1 Mac. viii., ix. 1-22; Jos. Ant. xii. 11). During the interval of peace which succeeded these victories, Judas endeavoured to form an alliance with the Romans against Demetrius. Two Jewish ambassadors who were sent to Rome succeeded in negotiating a treaty, which, however, was somewhat vague in its terms, and produced no practical results. Before it received the sanction of the senate, the great Jewish warrior had met his fate. His last battle was fought at Eleasa (B.C. 161) against Bacchides, who had been sent back to Judæa in place of Nicanor. So disheartened were the followers of Judas, that on the eve of battle he was deserted by all but 800 men, and even these urged him not to risk a conflict against such overwhelming numbers. "God forbid," was the proud answer, "that I should do this thing and flee away from before them: if our time be come, let us die manfully for our brethren, and let us not stain our honour." The 800 fought with all their old impetuous valour, and drove the right wing of the enemy in headlong rout before them. But the left wing closed round on them from behind, and then after a gallant stand against hopeless odds, a few survivors made their escape from the field. Amongst the slain was Judas Maccabæus. His body was carried off the field by his brothers Jonathan and Simon, and was buried with great lamentation in the family sepulchre at Modein.

37. JONATHAN SUCCEEDS JUDAS (1 Mac. ix. 23-73; Jos. Ant. xiii. 1). After the death of Judas, the Syrian party, supported by Bacchides, once more gained the ascendency in Judæa. It was

evidently the intention of Bacchides to put the government of the country into their hands, to suppress their opponents entirely, and then leave the Jews to their own devices. The scattered remnant of the Maccabees soon saw that unless they were to allow themselves to be exterminated in detail, they must again combine and take up arms in their own defence. They accordingly chose Jonathan, the youngest of the sons of Mattathias, as their leader. He was a man of a very different stamp from his brother Judas. Although he proved himself a brave and skilful general, his chief successes were due to the dexterous diplomacy with which he took advantage of the opportunities presented by the embarrassments of his adversaries. And as his power increased it became more and more manifest that the object of the struggle was no longer religious freedom (which indeed was scarcely endangered), but the establishment of the Asmonæan[a] house as the ruling power in the Jewish state. For the first three years of his leadership (160-157) Jonathan and his men barely maintained their ground, sometimes on the other side of the Jordan, and sometimes in the southern wilderness of Judah. But at last Bacchides, baffled in various attempts to capture him, became weary of the whole business, and quarrelled with the leaders of the Syrian faction. Jonathan adroitly seized the opportunity to come to terms with the general himself, who indeed only wanted a decent pretext for leaving the country. A friendly agreement was speedily arranged between them, and Bacchides promised to interfere no further in the affairs of the Jews. Jonathan then took up his abode in Michmash, from whence for six years he ruled the people after the fashion of the Judges of former days. In spite of the presence of the Syrian garrison at Jerusalem, his power was so firmly estab-

a The family name of the descendants of Mattathias. According to Josephus, Asmoneus was the great-grandfather of Mattathias.

lished that his support came to be a matter of the utmost consequence in the impending contest for the Syrian crown.

38. JONATHAN OBTAINS THE HIGH-PRIESTHOOD (1 Mac. x-xii.; Jos. Ant. xiii. 2. 4, 5). The High-Priest Alcimus had died in the year 159, and for some reason unknown to us the Syrian Government appointed no successor. There is little doubt that Jonathan, who of course was of priestly descent, had an eye to the vacant office; and everything comes to the man who waits. In B.C. 152 Alexander Balas, a pretended son of Antiochus Epiphanes, seized Ptolemais, and established himself there as a rival to Demetrius. Both parties immediately began to court the friendship of Jonathan. First of all, Demetrius granted him permission to levy an army and take possession of Jerusalem, with the exception of the citadel, which Jonathan, no doubt in perfect good faith, at once proceeded to do. But when Alexander Balas conferred on him the High-Priesthood and the title of king's friend, as the price of his support, he accepted the honour and the office without the least hesitation, and entered on his priestly functions at the Feast of Tabernacles in this same year 152. Demetrius then tried to win him back by still larger promises; but Jonathan distrusted him and definitely threw in his lot with the pretender. He had no reason to regret his choice. Demetrius was vanquished and killed by Balas, who heaped many fresh rewards on Jonathan, and found in him a steadfast friend and ally when Demetrius II. came forward to claim his father's crown. On the overthrow of Balas, which took place in B.C. 146, Jonathan transferred his allegiance to Demetrius, and was not only confirmed in the priesthood, but obtained nearly all the privileges which the first Demetrius had vainly offered six years before.

It would have been well if Jonathan had rested content with this and kept clear of the entangle-

ments of Syrian politics for the future. But he was extremely anxious to obtain the surrender of the citadel of Jerusalem, which was still occupied by the Syrians. Demetrius at length yielded this point, in return for Jonathan's assistance on the occasion of a popular rising in Antioch. But when the danger was past he broke his word, and then Jonathan formed an alliance with a certain Trypho, who had set up a puppet-king in the person of Antiochus VI., the son of Alexander Balas. Jonathan gained several important victories over the forces of Demetrius in the extreme north of Palestine, while his brother Simon was greatly strengthening his position in Judæa. But at last he fell a victim to the fathomless duplicity of Trypho, who had secret designs on the throne which he was sure that Jonathan would oppose. He therefore determined to get rid of him by treachery, and having lured him into the city of Ptolemais with only a few followers, he kept him prisoner and cut down his men. It was a melancholy, but not wholly undeserved, termination to a career which, though brilliantly successful in its results, compares unfavourably in its spirit and methods with those of Judas and Simon.

39. SIMON'S ADMINISTRATION (1 Mac. xiii., xiv.; Jos. Ant. xiii. 6). Trypho had no sooner got Jonathan into his power than he prepared to subjugate Judæa with a large army. At this crisis, Simon, the older brother of Judas and Jonathan, and the only remaining son of Mattathias, came to the front and assumed the command of the Jewish army. He first entered into negotiations with Trypho for the release of Jonathan, but though he fulfilled the stipulated conditions, Jonathan was still kept in captivity. Trypho then marched round the whole country, seeking an opportunity to advance on Jerusalem, but was baffled at all points by the vigilance of Simon. On one occasion he had made all his preparations for a cavalry march to relieve the garrison,

but this also was frustrated by a providential fall of snow. He then retreated round the south of the Dead Sea, and at Bascama, somewhere on the east of Jordan, he caused Jonathan to be put to death (B.C. 143). Simon now became governor and high-priest, as well as military chief, of the Jews. He has been well described as the statesman of his house, as Jonathan was the diplomatist, and Judas the hero. He adopted a policy entirely opposite to that of Jonathan, and far better adapted to the wants of the time. He did, indeed, formally acknowledge the sovereignty of Demetrius, but having obtained from him a concession of immunity from tribute, he wisely left the claimants for the Syrian throne to fight out their own quarrel, and devoted his attention to developing the resources of his country. In the year 141 the last great stronghold of the Syrian party, the fortress of Akra, was starved into surrender, and thus the land was finally rid of the presence of foreign troops. In the following year a great assembly at Jerusalem declared the offices of Prince and High-Priest of Judæa to be hereditary in the family of Simon until a faithful prophet should arise in Israel. These events mark the real commencement of the period of Jewish independence. The fruit of the long and arduous struggles of Judas and Jonathan was gathered in by the last survivor of their family, who ought to be regarded as the true founder of the Asmonæan dynasty. Under his wise and righteous administration the nation entered on an era of peace and prosperity such as it had not enjoyed since the Exile.

40. THE DEATH OF SIMON (1 Mac. xv., xvi.; Jos. Ant. xiii. 7). Towards the end of his life, however, Simon was again drawn into the troubles arising out of the Syrian succession. Demetrius II. was now a prisoner amongst the Parthians, and disappears from the scene for about ten years (138-128). The usurper Trypho was still in the field.

having murdered his royal charge shortly after the death of Jonathan. But the rights of Demetrius were taken up and asserted by his younger brother, Antiochus (VII.) Sidetes, who eventually overthrew Trypho. Whilst the issue was doubtful, this king sought the friendship of Simon, and even granted him the right of coining money in his own name. But after gaining some successes against Trypho, he changed his tone, and demanded the surrender of the towns of Joppa and Gazara, and the fortress of Jerusalem. Simon was willing to pay a moderate compensation for the possession of these places, but firmly refused to deliver them up. Antiochus then sent his general, Cendebæus, to take them by force, but he sustained a complete defeat at the hands of Judas and John, the sons of Simon. Two years later (B.C. 135), Simon was treacherously murdered at a banquet near Jericho, by his son-in-law Ptolemy, who wished to succeed him in his office. His sons, Judas and Mattathias, fell with him, and a like fate was prepared for the other son, John, who was then commandant of Gazara. But a timely warning put John on his guard; he hastened to Jerusalem, and at once assumed the High-Priesthood in his father's stead. Ptolemy in the meantime had sent messengers to Antiochus VII., informing him of what he had done, and offering to surrender the country into his hands. Thus the thirty years' struggle for independence, the most glorious period of Jewish history, closed in gloom and uncertainty, with the terror of foreign conquest still hanging over the unhappy nation.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ASMONÆAN DYNASTY.

B.C. 135-63.

41. THE LAST CONFLICT WITH SYRIA (Jos. Ant. xiii. 8). John Hyrcanus, the prince who now ascended the throne, is usually reckoned the first independent ruler of the Asmonæan dynasty. He was a man already tried in war, and his prompt action at this crisis saved his country from the horrors of anarchy. Ptolemy, the murderer of his father, could not have stood against him for a day, but that he kept the mother of John a prisoner, and threatened to torture her if her son should drive him to extremities. In this way he managed to hold out for some months in a small fort near Jericho, hoping that the Syrian king would come to his assistance. At last, however, he murdered his prisoners, fled across the Jordan, and was heard of no more. Soon afterwards, Antiochus VII., the ablest and best of the later Syrian monarchs, invaded Judæa, in order to assert his sovereign rights over it. John was forced to retire within the walls of Jerusalem, and a siege of nearly a year's duration ensued. When the Feast of Tabernacles came round, the Jews sought a truce of seven days to permit the due celebration of the festival. The king, who was perhaps weary of the war, not only granted the truce, but sent splendid offerings for the temple. The good feeling thus kindled on both sides, led to negotiations for an honourable peace. John consented to pay tribute for Joppa and other cities recently acquired by Judæa, but steadfastly refused to have another Syrian garrison quartered in Jerusalem. Antiochus ultimately withdrew this demand in return for a payment of 500 talents, and

after destroying the walls of Jerusalem, he left the country. Judæa was thus once more reduced to the position of a vassal principality, and this state of things continued till the death of Antiochus, who perished in an expedition against the Parthians, about the year 127. He was the last Syrian king who interfered with effect in the affairs of Judæa.

42. THE CONQUESTS OF JOHN HYRCANUS (Jos. Ant. xiii. 9. 10). These early troubles, however, were but the stormy dawn of a bright and glorious day. Although John Hyrcanus never assumed the title of king, it was he who raised the Jewish state to its highest point of political greatness and splendour. Before his death he had recovered most of the old historic territory of Israel; since the revolt of the ten tribes under Rehoboam, no Jewish sovereign had owned so large a dominion. It is true that his successes were chiefly due to the decay of the Syrian power, through the incessant contests of rival claimants for the crown. But John at least made the most of his opportunity. He maintained, as the nucleus of his army, a body of foreign mercenaries, whom he is said to have paid with treasure taken from the tomb of David. Thus equipped he first captured the fortified cities on the east of Jordan, then subdued the Samaritans, destroying the rival temple on Mount Gerizim, and lastly vanquished the Idumæans who still occupied the southern portion of Judæa. The subjugation of the latter was final and complete. Compelled to choose between giving up their lands and adopting the Jewish religion, these hereditary enemies of Israel submitted to the rite of circumcision, and were henceforth incorporated in the Jewish nation. The Samaritans, however, were not so easily dealt with. Towards the end of John's life they revolted and called in the aid of Syrian and Egyptian troops. Samaria was besieged by the two sons of Hyrcanus; the allies were defeated; and the city, after a stubborn resist-

ance, was taken and levelled with the ground. The rebellion was put down, but the spirit of the Samaritans was not broken; the severity practised by the Jews on this occasion only served to intensify the fierce undying hatred between the two races.

43. THE ORIGIN OF JEWISH PARTIES—I. THE PHARISEES.[a] Of the causes which brought about the downfall of Jewish independence, perhaps the most important was the mutual hostility of two great parties whose origin can be traced to the time of John Hyrcanus. The feud between the Pharisees and Sadducees is the outstanding feature in the history of the Asmonæan princes, and in order to understand the period it is necessary to have some knowledge of the growth and distinguishing tendencies of these rival factions. The Pharisees were the spiritual successors of the Chasidim, who had borne such an honourable part in the great struggle for religious liberty. We find in them the same fanatical devotion to the Law, and the same indifference to secular politics except when they thought the interests of religion were involved, which indeed was very often. If there was any difference at all, it was a difference of temper rather than of principles. The name Pharisees, or "Separatists," was given to them, probably by their enemies, to mark the haughty exclusiveness of their attitude towards the common people—the "people of the land." Separateness was in truth essential to the Pharisaic ideal of the religious life. The Law as expounded by the Scribes was so elaborate, and ran out into such a number of minute requirements, that to keep it perfectly was quite beyond the power of the average Israelite. The Pharisees were the men who gathered round the Scribes, accepted their teaching, and made it the chief business of their lives to reduce it to

[a] See the chapter on "Pharisees and Sadducees," in Schürer's "Jewish People in the time of Christ," Div. II., vol. II., pp. 4 43 of the English translation.

practice. And since the keeping of the Law was the real vocation of Israel, the Pharisee naturally came to regard himself and his sect as the only true Israelites, and to avoid contact with all others as defiling. The common people, on the other hand, conscious of their own shortcomings, repaid the scorn of the Pharisees with unbounded respect and reverence, and willingly yielded themselves up to their guidance. Though at no time very numerous,[a] they had such a hold on the nation that their opponents the Sadducees were compelled when in power to defer constantly to their opinion for fear of popular resistance.

Yet with all their faults the Pharisees were the best representatives of the living religion of their day. There were two truths especially, of vital importance to Israel and to humanity, of which they were the champions and exponents. First, it was in them alone that the hope of the Messiah was a practical power in the national life. They believed, as we have seen, that the one duty of Israel was to be a holy nation through scrupulous adherence to the covenant. But they also believed that when Israel was true to its calling the Messiah would appear, to break the yoke of the heathen, and redeem His people from all their afflictions. Hence their one interest in political questions was to get rid of all external hindrances to the perfect observance of the Law; they could be content with any government that did not interfere with that. Secondly, and closely connected with this, there was the doctrine of the resurrection. In those days the idea of a future life had little hold on men's minds apart from the expectation of the Messianic kingdom. It was clung to chiefly as the solution of a difficulty which weighed more and more heavily on the hearts of faithful Israelites—

a In the time of Herod they numbered over 6000. (Jos. Ant. xvii. 2 4.)

viz., what was to become of those who had been faithful to the covenant in life and death, and yet had not seen the promised reward? The answer was that these would be raised from the dead and share with the living in the glory of the latter days. Thus these two doctrines were for the time inseparably linked together; and although they underwent modifications and expansions as time went on, yet they never advanced much beyond this crude and narrow form till they were seen in the light of the life and teaching and resurrection of Christ.

44. II. THE SADDUCEES. The Sadducees [a] seem to have been *in* the first instance neither a religious sect nor a political party, but a *social clique*. Numerically they were a much smaller body than the Pharisees, and belonged for the most part to the wealthy and influential priestly families who formed the aristocracy of the Jewish nation. The leaders of the party were the elders who had seats in the council, the military officers, the statesmen, and officials who took part in the management of public affairs. With the mass of the people they never had much influence; like true aristocrats they did not greatly care for it. Their one ambition was to make themselves indispensable to the reigning prince, that they might conduct the government of the country according to their own views. This absorbing interest in the secular side of politics placed them in radical opposition to the Pharisees. The Sadducees held, like some more modern politi-

[a] That the name Sadducee is equivalent to "Zadokite" is now generally acknowledged. Who the Zadok was who gave his name to the party is, however, a more difficult question. The opinion of most recent scholars is that the name is derived from the "sons of Zadok" who held the High-Priesthood from the time of Solomon to the death of Onias III. (see p. 37). If this view is correct, the Sadducees were the members and adherents of the old High-Priestly family, who attached themselves to the Asmonæan priests after the revolution. Their worldly and anti-religious tendency is explained by the prominence they had always given to the political side of the High-Priest's functions.

cians, that the law of God had no application to politics. If Israel was to be made great and prosperous it must be by well-filled treasuries, strong armies, skilful diplomacy, and all the resources of human statecraft. God had left all such matters to human sagacity, and to expect a divine deliverance merely by making the people holy they accounted sheer and dangerous fatalism. Their religious position was little more than a protest against the extreme demands which the Pharisaic system made on faith and conduct. They rejected the entire mass of scribe-made law, acknowledging only the authority of the written word. To the Messianic hope they were profoundly indifferent. They denied the doctrine of the resurrection, avowedly because it was not contained in the Scriptures, but really because they had no need for it. They were men of the world, whose thoughts and aims were confined to the present life, and they had no interest in a spiritual world, or a life beyond the grave.

The antagonism of Pharisees and Sadducees was really at bottom a milder phase of the long conflict of Judaism and Hellenism,—the same conflict which had been waged between the Chasidim and the Greek party in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. Only, the field of contention was immensely narrowed. Then the very existence of Judaism was at stake, now both parties were united in upholding the national religion. But while the Pharisees sought to make religion supreme in every department of life, the Sadducees banished it from the sphere of politics, and sought to limit its obligations in all directions as much as possible.

45. III. THE ESSENES.[a] We must briefly notice the existence of another sect which appeared about this time, although it left no mark on the history of the period. There arose a body of men called

[a] See Schürer, *l. c.*, pp. 188-218.

Essenes, in whom the passion for ceremonial purity took a peculiar form, and was carried to most un-Jewish extremes. In order to realise their idea of a holy life, they separated themselves entirely from common society, and formed a sort of monastic order, into which no one was admitted without undergoing a long probation, and taking a solemn oath to conceal the doctrines of the brotherhood from the outside world. They lived by themselves in houses of their own, working in the field or at useful crafts, but shunning trade as tending to covetousness. The whole course of their daily life was regulated with a view to religious purity; each meal was a sacrifice, prepared by the priests belonging to the order, and partaken at a common table. The two points in which they went clearly beyond the limits of orthodox Judaism were, first, their rejection of animal sacrifices, and second, their custom of praying towards the rising sun, whose light they regarded as a manifestation of the brightness of God. But that, in spite of these eccentricities, they still considered themselves good Jews, was shown by their desire to keep up some sort of connection with the temple. Although they could take no share in the worship because of their objection to animal sacrifices, they showed their reverence for the sanctuary by sending regular offerings of incense. Living their simple unpretending life away from the turmoil and strife of the world, they gained a great reputation for piety and knowledge, Essene predictions of future events being highly esteemed and considered almost infallible.

46. THE QUARREL BETWEEN HYRCANUS AND THE PHARISEES (Jos. Ant. xiii. 10. 5, 6). For the greater part of the period covered by the present chapter, the Sadducees were in power, and the Pharisees in opposition. A very trifling incident in the reign of John Hyrcanus is said to have determined the attitude of the reigning family towards

the rival parties. At a great state-banquet, where the leaders of the Pharisees were present, John asked them to say whether they had any fault to find with his conduct. Thereupon a man called Eleazar bluntly replied that he ought to resign the High-Priesthood and confine himself to the civil government of the people. He gave as his reason that John's mother had been a slave in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes—an utterly baseless calumny, which was speedily disproved. Hyrcanus, however, who had previously been friendly to the Pharisees, took a very serious view of the matter. Having convinced himself that Eleazar had spoken the mind of his party, and that, for whatever reason, the Pharisees really wished to deprive him of his priestly dignity, he resolved to withdraw from them and join the Sadducees, who had already been trying to win him over to their side. We can hardly suppose that a man like Hyrcanus would have taken this important step without very strong reasons; and the most likely explanation of it is that the Pharisees were even then beginning to see that the union of priestly and royal power in the hands of one man was full of danger to the interests they had most at heart. The ruler would always be tempted to magnify the political side of his office, and the sanctions of religion would be disregarded in the pursuit of worldly greatness. That suspicion was only too abundantly justified by the subsequent history, and if the Pharisees did not at this time sympathise with the opinion of Eleazar, we shall find that they very soon came round to it.

47. THE SONS OF HYRCANUS (Jos. Ant. xiii. 11. 1—13. 4). After a long and prosperous reign of twenty-nine years John Hyrcanus died in 106, and was succeeded by his oldest son, ARISTOBULUS I. He was the first of the Asmonæan princes who assumed the title of king. From his fondness for Greek manners he received the surname of Phil-

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king was signalized by the crucifixion of 800 of his prisoners.

49. THE PHARISEES IN POWER UNDER ALEXANDRA (Jos. Ant. xiii. 16). The remaining twelve years of Alexander's life were chiefly occupied with military operations directed against Aretas, king of the Arabians or Nabateans. In his later years, however, he came to see that it would be impossible to rule much longer in opposition to the Pharisees, and that a complete change of policy was necessary to save the throne. Accordingly, in his dying charge to his wife, Alexandra, he recommended her, as soon as he was dead, to throw herself on the generosity of the Pharisees, and in all her actions to be guided by their advice. Alexandra carried out his injunctions to the letter. She dismissed the Sadducees from her counsels, and summoned the leaders of the Pharisees to her side. Her elder son, HYRCANUS II., a weak and irresolute man, was made High-Priest, while the younger and more enterprising, Aristobulus, was jealously excluded from public affairs. This was precisely the state of things at which the Pharisees had long been aiming. The priesthood was separated from the civil power, the queen had surrendered herself to their influence, and the High-Priest was a mere tool in their hands. And on the whole, they seem to have acted with wonderful discretion and ability. During her nine years' reign, Alexandra maintained the honour of the country in her dealings with neighbouring states, and gave her people a much-needed interval of rest and tranquillity. But it seemed as if nothing would teach either party the virtue of toleration when in power. After a time the Pharisees proceeded to take vengeance on their opponents for the crimes they had committed in the previous reign. Then the Sadducees took alarm, and went in a body to implore the protection of the queen. With many tears they recounted their

services to the royal house, they protested their unabated loyalty to herself, so that they were ready to die at the palace gate rather than take up arms against her. They represented the disgrace it would be, if they were compelled to seek employment abroad, and hinted that any of the neighbouring princes would be only too eager to secure the services of men like themselves, whose very names had been a terror to them. The poor queen fell upon the worst of all the possible courses open to her. Despairing of effecting a lasting reconciliation between the two parties, she put the Sadducees in possession of various fortresses, that they might have the means of defending themselves from their enemies. There, of course, the Sadducees at once began to intrigue in favour of Aristobulus, who had warmly espoused their cause, and henceforth became their favourite and leader. The result was seen as soon as Alexandra fell sick. Aristobulus stole away from Jerusalem by night, and visited the fortresses that were under the command of his partisans. In less than a fortnight, twenty-one garrisons had declared for him; and in this threatening situation of affairs, Queen Alexandra died (B.C. 69).

50. THE ABDICATION OF HYRCANUS (Jos. Ant. xiv. 1. 1, 2.) In the contest between the two brothers, which broke out on the death of Alexandra, the Pharisees and Sadducees were again ranged on opposite sides. Hyrcanus was easily defeated in the first battle, and shut himself up in the Baris, a castle which John Hyrcanus had built in Jerusalem. Being a man totally destitute of ambition, he had no desire to prolong the war, and offered to relinquish both the crown and the High-Priesthood, on condition that he might retain his private fortune, and live peaceably in the capital. His brother agreed to this, and became king under the title of ARISTOBULUS II. The reign of Hyrcanus II. had lasted only three months.

51. ANTIPATER THE IDUMÆAN (Jos. Ant. xiv. 1. 3—2. 2). If Hyrcanus had been left to himself there is no doubt that his part of the compact would have been faithfully observed. But he had an evil genius at his side in the person of Antipater, an Idumæan, whose father had entered the service of Alexander Jannæus, and who had himself obtained great influence over Hyrcanus. Finding his prospects of advancement blighted by the abdication of Hyrcanus, he could not rest until he had exhausted every effort to raise him again to the throne. Hyrcanus was slow to move, but at last Antipater roused in his dull mind a suspicion that his brother intended to take his life, and so induced him to flee to Petra, the capital of Aretas, the king of Arabia. There Antipater concluded an agreement, according to which Aretas was to receive back certain cities that had been taken from him by Alexander Jannæus, on condition that he should send an army to restore Hyrcanus to his kingdom. When the Arabian soldiers appeared in Judæa, the Pharisees once more declared for Hyrcanus, and raised a formidable rebellion amongst the people. Aristobulus was defeated and besieged by the Pharisees and Arabs in the Temple. Although he was deserted by all but a few followers, mostly priests, the strength of the place enabled him to hold out for a considerable time. Meanwhile important events which had occurred in another quarter were preparing an unwelcome solution of the difficulties in which the Jewish nation was so hoplessly entangled.

52. THE INTERVENTION OF ROME (Jos. Ant. xiv. 2. 3—3. 4). We have now reached the time when the Jews were to be brought into immediate relations with the irresistible force of the Roman Republic. Shortly before the events we have narrated, Pompey the Great, then at the zenith of his power, had been sent out to the East, with unlimited authority over the whole of Asia as far as

Armenia. In the year 64, when the siege of the Temple was proceeding, his general, Scaurus, reached Damascus. Each of the contending parties in Judæa sent a deputation with gifts requesting his support. Scaurus gave his decision in favour of Aristobulus, and ordered the Arabs to withdraw. But in the same year Pompey himself came to Damascus, and in the following spring the two brothers appealed to him as the ultimate authority for a settlement of the dispute. On this occasion, however, we read of a third deputation, who appeared in the name of the people, and prayed for the abolition of the monarchy, as inconsistent with their divinely-ordained constitution. Such a proposal could in the circumstances only mean the establishment of Roman rule, and there can be no doubt as to the quarter whence it emanated. It was the Pharisees who, thoroughly disgusted with the abuses that now seemed inseparable from the existing *regime*, sought for this as the nearest possible approach to the ideal of a pure Theocracy, in which the nation should have no king but God, and no earthly ruler except the High-Priest. Pompey had doubtless determined on the course he would pursue, but to avoid needless bloodshed, he dismissed all the ambassadors with civil words, and promised to investigate the matters laid before him when he should arrive in Judæa. Aristobulus had already offended him by the absurd way in which he had pleaded his cause, and now provoked him still further by his vacillating and ambiguous conduct. Professing to submit to Pompey's decision, he spent his time in making preparations for resistance in case it should be against him. At last he was brought to book by a peremptory order to deliver up the capital to an officer of Pompey's army. This he promised to do, but while he was detained in the Roman camp, his adherents in the city closed its gates in the face of the troops sent to take possession. Pompey then arrested Aristobulus, and marched in person against Jerusalem.

53. THE FIRST ROMAN SIEGE OF JERUSALEM (Jos. Ant. xiv. 4). Within the city all was now confusion and division of counsels. The Pharisees were in favour of trusting Pompey and making an unconditional surrender. The followers of Aristobulus were determined to resist to the end. Ultimately the party of Aristobulus fortified themselves in the temple, while the Pharisees delivered up the rest of the city to Pompey. Then began (B.C. 63) the first Roman siege of the Temple. The defenders, refusing all terms, held out with heroic courage. It is said that it was only by taking advantage of the Sabbaths, when the Jews would do nothing beyond self-defence, that the Roman was able to advance his engines near enough to make a breach in the fortifications. After three months this was effected, the Roman soldiers stormed the walls, and after a horrible scene of carnage, the Roman eagles were planted on the Temple mount. The crowning disgrace in the eyes of the Jews was the fact that Pompey insisted on entering the Holy of Holies. Although he touched neither the treasures nor the sacred vessels, and gave orders on retiring that everything should be put right for the regular service, still the mere fact that an uncircumcised Gentile had trodden the sacred courts was an unpardonable offence and an unspeakable humiliation. Pompey then made his arrangements for the administration of the country. Hyrcanus was reinstated in the High-Priesthood with the new title of *Ethnarch* instead of king. He was deprived, however, of all the territory acquired by the Maccabæan conquests, only Judæa proper being left under his jurisdiction. Even this he held subject to an annual tribute to the Romans. Aristobulus and his two sons were carried off to Rome to grace the splendid triumph which Pompey celebrated on his return from his Asiatic conquests. In that procession, too, there were thousands of Jewish captives, who were

afterwards set at liberty, and laid the foundation of the large Jewish colony which we find at Rome in the days of the Apostles.

CHAPTER V.

THE ROMAN PERIOD.

B.C. 63-4.

54. THE NEW TEMPER OF THE PEOPLE. For the next thirty years the political history of Judæa is marked by a succession of desperate attempts on the part of the people to regain its freedom. The unsettled condition of affairs at Rome, where a few great men were contending for the mastery of the world,[a] presented many opportunities to the Jews to create disturbances. To us the most noteworthy feature of the period is the change that had come over the spirit of the nation since last it was subject to a foreign power. The Persian and

[a] The student will find it necessary to bear in mind the following facts and dates in Roman history:—The First Triumvirate—a mere private arrangement between Pompey, Cæsar, and Crassus—was formed in B.C. 60. Crassus perished in the Parthian campaign in the year 53. The growing jealousy between Cæsar and Pompey led to civil war in 49, and in the following year Pompey was defeated in the battle of Pharsalia, and fled to Egypt, where he was murdered soon after. From this time till his death Cæsar ruled the Roman world as Dictator. He was assassinated in B.C. 44 by the so-called Republican party, led by Brutus and Cassius. These men had to flee from Rome, and began to establish their power in the East. Meanwhile the second Triumvirate—Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus—had been proclaimed at Rome; and in the year 42 their forces met and defeated those of Brutus and Cassius at Philippi. After this Lepidus was ignored by the other two Triumvirs, and was obliged to retire into private life, leaving Octavian and Antony to wrestle for the mastery of the world. Discord soon arose between them, and after several attempts at reconciliation, Antony was defeated in the battle of Actium (B.C. 31). Octavian then became the first Roman emperor, under the title of Augustus.

early Greek kings had found the Jews very submissive and tractable subjects so long as their religious liberty was respected. But eighty years of partial independence and Pharisaic teaching had changed all this, and made the Jews perhaps the most troublesome of all the races with whom the Romans had to deal. For one thing, no doubt, religion itself occupied a larger space in the thoughts of the people at large than it had done before the Maccabee rebellion. The dominion of the heathen over the people of God, no matter how considerately it might be exercised, was felt to be in itself an intolerable anomaly. The consequences of that feeling were very important. It gave a new direction to the Messianic hope; men were no longer content to wait quietly for a miraculous deliverance, or to work for it only in the way of obedience to the Law. They held that God would help those who helped themselves; their first duty as believers in His promises was to fight for emancipation from the Roman yoke. The Pharisees of the old school thus partly lost the confidence of the people, their doctrines seemed unsuited to the circumstances of the age. Even at this time we see the beginning of the movement which ended in the formation of the party of the Zealots — the party that ultimately plunged the nation into its last disastrous struggle with Rome.

55. ATTEMPTS TO RESTORE THE ASMONÆANS (Jos. Ant. xiv. 5. 6). But besides this new sensitiveness in the sphere of religion, there are distinct traces of the rise of a sentiment of natural patriotism during those years of power and independence. Amongst the lower classes there was a strong attachment to the members of the Asmonæan family, the representatives of the national cause, whose misfortunes had only endeared them the more to the hearts of their countrymen. Accordingly, when Alexander, the elder son of Aristobulus II., escaped from his guards on the way to Rome, and ap-

peared in Palestine, he speedily found himself at the head of a force large enough to seize Jerusalem, and overawe the Roman garrison in the citadel. This rising was put down by the arrival of Gabinius from Syria, where he had just succeeded to Pompey's command. In order to weaken still further the national spirit in Judæa, Gabinius broke up the country into five small districts, each under its local court or Sanhedrin, and strictly forbade the carrying of appeals from any of these districts to the Great Sanhedrin at Jerusalem.[a]

The next revolt was caused by the return of Aristobulus himself, who with his second son had made his escape from Rome. Although he still found many adherents in Judæa, he was unable to maintain his ground against the forces of Gabinius. He was compelled to surrender himself, and was sent back a prisoner to Rome. There he remained till the great quarrel between Cæsar and Pompey broke out in B.C. 49, when the former proposed to send him out to Palestine with an army to create a diversion against Pompey in that quarter. The scheme was defeated by the poisoning of Aristobulus, it is supposed, by members of Pompey's faction. About the same time his son Alexander was beheaded by Pompey's orders at Antioch.

56. THE GROWING POWER OF ANTIPATER (Jos. Ant. xiv. 8. 11). With the return of Hyrcanus to office, his minister, Antipater, had become the most influential personage in Jewish politics. The cool and crafty Idumæan, free from Jewish passions and prejudices, saw clearly that in one form or other the Roman supremacy must inevitably be established over Judæa. He saw that there was a

a It is in connection with these arrangements of Gabinius that the name Sanhedrin (Greek, *Sunedrion*) first occurs. Whether any change in the composition of the council took place at this time is uncertain. The local councils of Gabinius were abolished, and the authority of the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem over the whole land was restored, by Julius Cæsar in B.C. 47. (Cf. above, p. 29.)

prospect of winning the kingdom for his family by showing himself the devoted partisan of the interests of Rome. He therefore set himself diligently to cultivate the friendship of whoever appeared for the time to be the rising man in the Roman world. It was no easy task to keep on good terms with all the men who rose in rapid succession to supreme power at Rome, and Antipater frequently found himself on the losing side. But he never failed to ingratiate himself with the victor, and his consistent faithlessness to one master after another served his purpose far better than chivalrous devotion to any one of them would have done. His greatest success was achieved in B.C. 48, when Julius Cæsar, after the death of Pompey, came to Egypt and found himself hard pressed for want of men and money. Antipater, who had hitherto supported Pompey, hastened to his assistance with a body of troops, and in many ways proved himself so useful and zealous that he gained the complete confidence, and even friendship, of Cæsar. As a reward for his services, he was appointed Governor of Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee, Hyrcanus, of course, retaining the nominal sovereignty. During the brief period of Cæsar's power everything went well for Antipater's schemes. With the help of his sons, Phasael and Herod, he kept order in all his provinces, and by his influence with Cæsar he procured many privileges for the Jews, both in their own land and throughout the Roman world. When the unexpected news reached him of Cæsar's assassination in B.C. 44, it seemed as if all his labour had been in vain. The Jews were not to be bribed by all the benefits he had secured them; they were eager to get rid of the upstart Idumæans, who were beginning to act as if the country belonged to them. Accordingly, while Antipater was straining every effort to raise supplies for Cassius, the Republican leader, he was suddenly cut off by poison administered by a Jew, who thought in this way to de-

liver his country from its worst enemy. But he had made a mistake ; a more dangerous enemy was left. Antipater left behind him a son who, with more than his father's cunning and audacity, followed the line of action which he had sketched out, and never halted till he had laid Judæa prostrate and bleeding at his feet.

57. THE RISE OF HEROD (Jos. Ant. xiv. 9. 12). This son, Herod, had already distinguished himself in his father's lifetime as governor of Galilee. That province was infested by bands of armed men, commonly called "robbers," but in reality the scattered remnants of the army of Aristobulus. The energy with which he hunted down and slaughtered these rebels earned for Herod the thanks of Sextus Cæsar, then Roman governor of Syria, who became his fast friend and protector. But it also brought him into conflict with the authorities at Jerusalem. Amongst the robber-chiefs were some natives of Judæa whom Herod executed without a trial. This was an invasion of the rights of the Sanhedrin, to whom alone it pertained to pass sentence of death on a Jew. Herod was accordingly summoned before the supreme court to stand his trial on a charge of murder. It was a time of intense anxiety to the patriotic party, who knew that they were measuring their strength with the whole Idumæan interest, backed by the influence of the Romans. And when Herod appeared before the court clothed in royal purple and accompanied by armed guards, the courage of his judges forsook them, and no one dared to open his mouth against him. At last they were roused by the bitter reproaches and stern warnings of one of their number named Sameas, and were on the point of pronouncing sentence on Herod, when Hyrcanus, who knew that he would be held responsible for the consequences, adjourned the trial to a future day. Before the next sitting Herod had retired to his friend Sextus at Damascus, and was hardly restrained by his father's

entreaties from advancing against Jerusalem with a Roman army to avenge the insult offered to him. Such was Herod's first appearance in public life. The Jews knew what they had to expect if ever he should become their master, and beheld with dismay his sure and steady progress towards the object of his ambition. When, after the battle of Philippi, Antony became the ruler of the East, three successive deputations appeared before him to ask his protection against the two brothers, Phasael and Herod. But it was all in vain. Herod secured the confidence of Antony as completely as his father had gained that of Cæsar, and Antony treated the Jews with a contempt and cruelty of which his great predecessor had never been guilty. The upshot was that the two brothers were appointed Tetrarchs under Hyrcanus as king (B.C. 41).

58. THE REIGN OF ANTIGONUS (Jos. Ant. xiv. 13). Just at this time, when the complete triumph of the Idumæan family seemed inevitable, a last gleam of hope lit up the decaying cause of the Asmonæans. Antigonus, the younger son of Aristobulus II., had tried in various ways to make good his title to the throne of his fathers, but hitherto without the least success. He had been rejected by Cæsar in the year 48, when he was forestalled by Antipater; and a later attempt to enter Judæa with an army had been defeated by Herod. But in B.C. 40, while Antony was absent in Egypt, the Parthian armies burst into Syria. They were easily induced by the promise of a large sum of money to take up the cause of the Asmonæan prince against Herod and the Romans, and with their help Antigonus succeeded in forcing his way to Jerusalem, where he was eagerly welcomed by the populace. The fortunes of the two brothers now sunk to the lowest ebb. Hyrcanus and Phasael fell into the hands of the Parthians, and the former, after having his ears cut off in order to disqualify him for the priesthood was

removed to Babylonia. Phasael committed suicide in prison; and Herod himself, although he was never captured, was reduced to such straits, that at one time he was on the point of following his brother's example. With great difficulty he escaped from the country, and leaving his wives and faithful adherents in the fortress of Masada, near the southern end of the Dead Sea, he made his way, a solitary fugitive, to the court of the King of Arabia. Antigonus thus became the undisputed master of the kingdom, and was installed as High-Priest under his Hebrew name of Mattathias. For three years he maintained the semblance of power, but it soon appeared that he was unable to cope with the difficulties of his situation. His only prospect of permanent sovereignty lay in the support of Rome, and this Antigonus made no effort to secure. After the withdrawal of the Parthians he obtained no decided success, either by war or statesmanship, the enthusiasm of the people gradually died down, and his chances of success, such as they were, slipped out of his hands.

59. HEROD OBTAINS THE KINGDOM (Jos. *Ant.* xiv. 14-16). Herod, in the meantime, was displaying all the tenacious energy and readiness of resource, which are almost the only admirable features of his character. Driven from the Arabian court in disgrace, he went next to Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt; but failing to obtain from her the help he wanted, he determined to push on to Rome. There he had an interview with both Antony and Octavian, and speedily obtained a decree of the Senate, appointing him King of Judæa. In the spring of the year 39 he returned to take possession of his future kingdom. But the resistance of the Jews was so stubborn, and the Roman generals sent to assist him were so half-hearted in his support, that after two years' constant fighting he seemed no nearer his object than when he began. At last, early in

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37, Antony lent him two Roman legions under Sosius, to undertake the conquest of Judæa in earnest. Herod then advanced southward through Galilee, overcoming all opposition, and taking fearful vengeance on his conquered enemies and on defenceless cities that fell into his power. Jerusalem was then surrounded by a host of 100,000 Jews and Romans, and the horrors of the second great Roman siege began. The leaders of the Pharisees, regarding Herod as God's scourge to punish the nation for its sins, again counselled submission and surrender, but the people took matters into their own hands. Animated by a fanatical expectation that the long-deferred Messianic deliverance was now imminent, they defended the Holy City and the Temple to the last extremity. Slowly they were driven from one line of defence after another, and the final assault took place on the anniversary of the day on which the temple was taken by Pompey, twenty-six years before. It required all Herod's exertions to save the sanctuary from desecration, and he had to pay the Roman soldiers a large sum out of his private purse to prevent the plunder of the city. Antigonus surrendered himself to Sosius, and was taken to Antioch, where he was soon afterwards beheaded by Antony at Herod's instigation.

60. HEROD STRENGTHENS HIS POSITION (Jos. Ant. xv. 1-7 *passim*). Herod the Great, as he was afterwards called, had now reached the goal towards which his father and he had laboured so long and with such inexhaustible perseverance. From this time till his death, a period of thirty-three years (37-4 B.C.), his position was never seriously threatened by any internal disturbance. Nevertheless, the first nine years of his reign were full of difficulties of various kinds, and were in consequence stained by a series of atrocious crimes. One of his first acts was to break the power of the Sadducee aristocracy by executing forty-five of their number

who had been prominent supporters of Antigonus.[a] The surviving Asmonæans were a constant source of apprehension to him, but he did not at first think it necessary to remove them out of his way. In B.C. 37, before the siege of Jerusalem, he had married the beautiful and high-minded Mariamne,[b] the grand-daughter both of Hyrcanus and Aristobulus II., and he probably hoped that, as her husband, he would be accepted as the representative of the Asmonæan claims. Yet within a very few years every member of that unfortunate house had met a violent end at his hands. The first victim was Aristobulus, Mariamne's brother, and the rightful heir both of the crown and the High-Priesthood. To please his mother-in-law, Herod appointed him High-Priest at the unlawful age of seventeen. But when he observed how rapidly the young and handsome Asmonæan was gaining the hearts of the people, he became alarmed, and caused him to be drowned, as if by accident, whilst bathing with his companions (B.C. 35).[c] The aged Hyrcanus,[d] the only male survivor of the family, was too feeble to excite serious suspicion, until in the year 30 Herod had to face the most dangerous crisis of his reign. The defeat of Antony by Octavian, in the battle of Actium, had destroyed the foundation of all his power. He had been Antony's most zealous supporter up to the last, and only a man of Herod's audacity would have conceived the bold project of going to meet the victor and seek the confirmation of his authority. Before starting on that difficult mission, from which he hardly expected to return, Herod caused Hyrcanus to be murdered.[e] He also

a Jos. Ant. xv. 1. 2. These men were most likely all members of the Sanhedrin, and would have constituted a majority of that body. It is therefore improbable that the execution of the *whole* Sanhedrin by Herod, mentioned by Josephus as a separate event, ever took place.

b xiv. 15. 14. *c* xv. 3. 1-3.

d Herod had induced him to return from Babylonia, in order that he might have him under his own eye.

e Jos. Ant. xv. 6. 1-3.

left confidential orders that if anything should befall him, his wife Mariamne should be put to death.[a] He had done the same thing in similar circumstances before, and on both occasions the secret was betrayed to the queen. Herod succeeded with Octavian beyond his most sanguine anticipations. He was confirmed in the kingdom, his dominions were increased, and he returned to Jerusalem secure in the favour and friendship of the autocrat of the Roman world. But all the joy of success was spoiled by the reception that awaited him at home. Mariamne took no pains to conceal her resentment at his cruel and jealous design : she treated him with such haughty coldness that life with her became intolerable. For about a year the miserable domestic discord lasted, diligently fomented by Herod's sister Salome, till at last the king, stirred to fury by suspicions of her fidelity, had her tried and condemned to death (B.C. 29).[b] When he realised what he had done, his passionate love of her came back to him with terrible power, and he was seized with such intense anguish of mind that he fell into a dangerous sickness, and was thought to be dying. After his recovery he added one more to the list of his victims, Alexandra, the mother of Mariamne, the last descendant of the Asmonæan kings.[c]

61. HEROD'S PUBLIC WORKS (Jos. Ant. xv. 8. 5 ; 9. 6, 11). Having thus strengthened his position both at home and abroad, Herod felt himself free to indulge his favourite inclinations as a ruler. The next fourteen years of his reign (B.C. 28-14) were chiefly devoted to a variety of peaceful undertakings, especially the erection of many public buildings and new cities throughout his dominions. Besides gratifying his own passion for magnificence and display, Herod had another object in view in these costly enterprises. He wished to be known at Rome as an admirer of Roman fashions and an enlightened

a Jos. Ant. xv. 6. 5. *b* xv. 7. 1-4. *c* xv. 7. 8.

promoter of Roman civilization amongst his subjects. For this purpose he built a theatre in Jerusalem, and a huge amphitheatre just outside the gates, and endeavoured to familiarize the Jews with the brutal spectacles of the Roman circus. Outside of Judæa proper he was an undisguised patron of heathenism. He freely erected heathen temples within his own territory, and contributed to their erection in other places. The new cities he built were all laid out in the most approved Roman style. Of these new cities, the most important was the seaport of Cæsarea, named in honour of Cæsar Augustus (Octavian), to whose worship its temple was dedicated. Thus far Herod seemed to be treading closely in the footsteps of Antiochus Epiphanes, and it is no wonder that the Jews looked with alarm on this fostering of paganism as proof of a design to undermine their religion. But Herod had not the remotest intention of attempting the subversion of Judaism. The greatest of all his public works, the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, was meant to gain the goodwill of his subjects by a show of zeal for the religion which he himself professed. That great work was commenced in B.C. 20, and was pressed on with so much energy, that in a year and a half the Temple proper was complete and ready for the ordinary services. The outer courts, with their storehouses and splendid arcades, took eight years more, and even then the work was not nearly finished. It was still proceeding in the time of Christ,[a] and was not concluded till A.D. 60, only a few years before its final destruction. Herod spared no pains to make the new Temple a worthy monument of the glory and prosperity of his reign. That, indeed, as the Jews knew very well, was his principal ambition, and it was with great difficulty that their objections to Herod's project were overcome. And although Herod began by deferring to their views in every minute particular, it seemed as

[a] See John ii. 20.

if he could not stop without doing something to wound their religious susceptibilities. Over the main entrance to the outer court he placed a golden eagle, the symbol of the Roman dominion; so that the worshippers could not approach the sanctuary without being reminded that they owed this splendid edifice to one whose power rested on the hated protection of Rome.

62. **HEROD'S ADMINISTRATION.** In many other ways Herod sought to act the part of a benevolent despot, and it cannot be denied that under his government the nation made great advances in material prosperity. His influence with the emperor procured an extension of privileges to the Jews of the Dispersion, and gained a certain respect for Judaism in the highest circles of the heathen world. At home he encouraged commerce and agriculture, granted remissions of taxation, and maintained perfect tranquillity throughout the land. During a famine which occurred in the year 24 he sold some of his private furniture to buy corn from Egypt, which he distributed gratuitously among the starving people.[a] By measures such as these Herod succeeded in acquiring a certain amount of superficial popularity, on the strength of which he would fain have figured before his Roman friends as a prince beloved by his people. But no one knew better than himself how shallow his popularity was, and how utterly the real heart of the people was estranged from him. He did not trust his subjects; his castles frowned down on them on every side, all public assemblies were prohibited, and the paid spies of the king moved about everywhere, keeping strict watch over the actions of suspected persons.[b] Not content with these precautions, about the year 20 Herod determined to exact an oath of fidelity from all his subjects, the harmless and peace-loving Essenes being alone exempted. The great majority

[a] Jos. Ant. xv. 9. 1, 2. [b] xv. 10. 4.

of the Pharisees, however, refused to take this oath, and Herod was obliged to rest satisfied with inflicting a fine for their obstinacy. Such an exercise of forbearance, however, was of very rare occurrence in Herod's administration. The clemency and magnanimity of a true king were foreign to his nature, and all the benefits of his rule were neutralised in the feeling of his people by the frequent outbreaks of his gloomy and vindictive temper. To the day of his death he never kindled one spark of loyal and disinterested affection in the breast of any human being.

63. THE JEWISH SECTS IN THE TIME OF HEROD. The execution of the leading Sadducees in the beginning of Herod's reign [a] had reduced that party to a position of political impotence. Their irreligious principles ought to have made them very acceptable members of a court like Herod's, but they had been too deeply committed to the cause of the Asmonæans to be safely trusted. Moreover the hereditary priesthood had been abolished by Herod,[b] who conferred the dignity on creatures of his own, holding office at his pleasure, mostly obscure strangers with no influence in the country except what they derived from his support. After a time, however, the chief priest was usually selected from five or six privileged families, and it is possible that these may have included some of the old Sadducee families. At all events the new priestly aristocracy was characterised by the same worldly tendencies as the old. Amongst the families which owed their first elevation to Herod was that of Boethus, an Alexandrian Jew, whose son was appointed High-Priest (about B.C. 25) because Herod had married his daughter after the murder of Mariamne. This man became the founder of a party called the Boethusians, who are often mentioned in Jewish writings as a mere offshoot of the Sadducees. Thus the spirit of

a See above, page 78f.

b Jos. Ant. xv. 3. 1

the Sadducees worked on when their power as a party was gone, and after the close of the Herodian period they again obtained a leading position in Jewish affairs.

As for the Pharisees, it would have been impossible to tell beforehand what attitude their principles would lead them to assume towards a ruler like Herod. On the one hand they might look on his reign, supported by heathen power, with its glaring violations of Mosaic institutions, as an evil to be resisted to the death. But, on the other hand, they might fall back on their doctrine of Providence, and submit to the inevitable, in order to labour more effectually at their great task of preparing the people for God's salvation. The second view seems to have been the one that commended itself to the bulk of the party, although their refusal of the oath of allegiance shows that they were not prepared to make any formal acknowledgment of the legitimacy of Herod's rule. Herod on his part treated them with exceptional forbearance and consideration. He exhibited no jealousy of their influence with the people; on the contrary, he bestowed marks of honour on some of their leaders, notably the stern Sameas, who, it will be remembered, had denounced him on the first occasion when he came into public notice. At this time, therefore, great activity prevailed in the Pharisaic schools, and some of the most famous names on the list of Jewish scribes adorned the age of Herod. By far the most celebrated of these were the two contemporaries, Shammai and Hillel, who henceforth divided the expounders of the Law into two opposing schools. The followers of Shammai were distinguished by their rigorous interpretation of the Law, those of Hillel by an easier and more accommodating standard of legal righteousness. Shammai has sometimes been identified with the Sameas whom we have just mentioned. His opponent Hillel, the most loveable of all the Rabbis,

was a Babylonian Jew of humble birth, who, by his zeal for learning, raised himself to the first rank as a teacher, and by the beauty and gentleness of his character attracted round him a devoted band of disciples. In modern times he has been represented as the reformer of Judaism, sometimes even as the equal of Christ, if not the real author of the Gospel morality. It is difficult to see how such an extravagant estimate of the man could be formed. When we read of the trivial questions that engaged his attention, even his title of Reformer of Judaism sounds somewhat ridiculous; and he certainly cannot be regarded as a great religious personality. To break the yoke of tradition and trust to the impulses of a heart renewed by the forgiving love of God, was a thought as far above his vision as it was above that of any of his contemporaries. Hillel may have been the greatest of the scribes, but he was only a scribe after all.

64. THE CLOSE OF HEROD'S REIGN (Jos. Ant. xvi.). The prosperous part of Herod's reign came to an end about the year 14. The remaining ten years of his life present a terrible record of sin and punishment going hand in hand, where the crimes of his early reign seem to rise from their graves and drive him into ever deeper depths of wickedness and despair. Trouble broke out first of all in the bosom of his family. Mariamne had left two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, who inherited something of their mother's beauty and proud spirit. They had been carefully educated at Rome under the eye of the emperor, and when Herod brought them home it was with the avowed intention of making them the heirs of his kingdom. No sooner had they set foot in their father's realm than they were surrounded by a network of treachery and intrigue. All the arch-plotters of Herod's court—his sister Salome, his brother Pheroras, and an older son named Antipater, who had been specially sent for

to act the spy on his two step-brothers—set themselves to compass the ruin of the unoffending youths. When all other devices failed, they induced the king to believe that the sons of Mariamne were waiting an opportunity to avenge their mother's death. A suspicion once lodged in Herod's mind always worked to one result. For several years he did not dare to execute the fell purpose which he had conceived: he even sought the advice of Augustus, and allowed a hollow reconciliation to be patched up by his intercession. But he could not rest until he obtained the emperor's permission to have his sons tried before a special commission on a charge of treason. Herod took care that the trial should end in a condemnation, and the two princes were strangled at Samaria in B.C. 7. It was the news of this unnatural crime that drew from Augustus the biting remark that he would rather be one of Herod's swine than one of his sons. Before this indeed the relations between Herod and the emperor had been somewhat strained, and he began to fear that there might be limits even to that friendship which it had been the first object of his policy to maintain. The people, too, whose sympathies had been aroused on behalf of Mariamne's children, became more restive than ever; and the king, already seized with an incurable internal disease, was maddened by the thought that his subjects were eagerly awaiting the announcement of his death. Their irrepressible excitement found vent in a popular tumult, during which the golden eagle above the Temple gates was pulled down and destroyed. The ringleaders were brought down to Jericho and burned alive by Herod's orders.[a] Meanwhile the king was trying the most desperate remedies to prolong his wretched existence, and yet suffering such torments that he was with difficulty restrained from killing himself.[b] His last act was the execution of his son,

a Jos. Ant. xvii. 6. 1-4. b xvii. 6. 5; 7.

Antipater,[a] who had been convicted on the clearest evidence of attempts on his father's life. Five days later the old tyrant breathed his last. Determined that his death should not be an occasion of universal rejoicing, he had caused the leading inhabitants of the capital to be imprisoned, and made his sister swear that when his death was made known they should all be butchered.[b] Happily these bloody instructions were disregarded; the prisons were all emptied, and there was nothing to mar the feeling of relief with which the news of his death was received.[c]

65. THE BIRTH OF CHRIST. In the last year of Herod's life (B.C. 4)[d] Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem. The two names are inseparably associated in our memories by the story of the Massacre of the Innocents. It is a strange testimony to the character of Herod's rule that this event, which strikes us as an almost unparalleled atrocity, is not once mentioned by any contemporary historian, as though it had attracted no attention amidst the worse horrors of his closing years. As we read these opening pages of the gospel narrative we are reminded how little we have been able to see of the inner life of the people whose history we have now followed through so many vicissitudes. In the

a Jos. Ant. xvii. 7. *b* xvii. 6. 5. *c* xvii. 8.

d The death of Herod is very important chronologically, as the event that enables us to connect the Christian era with the systems of chronology that were in use in the time of Christ. It can be determined with great certainty, from a comparison of the dates given by Josephus, and from an eclipse of the moon which happened a short time before. It is thus proved that Herod died in the year of Rome 750. The Christian era was fixed by the calculations of Dionysius Exiguus, an abbot of the 6th century, who placed the birth of Christ in the year of Rome 754. This accordingly is the year from which all Christian nations reckon their time. But since the birth of Christ took place *before* the death of Herod, it follows that the former event has been placed at least four years too late. Thus the year 1889 is really 1893 years after the birth of Christ. It would of course be impossible to alter a system of reckoning which has been so long in use; and therefore we are compelled to express the truth by saying that our Lord was born in the year 4 B.C.

carpenter of Nazareth and his virgin wife, in the parents of John the Baptist, in the shepherds who kept their flocks in the fields of Bethlehem, in the little group of saints who gathered round the infant Saviour in the Temple, we recognise the humble representatives of the purest type of Jewish piety. Men and women like these had lived and died in Israel during all these centuries ; far removed from the pomp of earthly courts, and the strife of factions and the heated atmosphere of political and religious fanaticism, they had waited for the consolation of Israel. And now at last to such as these the long expected Messiah had been revealed. In the hour of Israel's deepest degradation, when Herod's kingdom seemed to mock the aspirations of all faithful Israelites with its counterfeit semblance of Messianic glory, their eyes beheld the Lord's Anointed, the true King of the kingdom of God, the Ruler "whose goings forth were from of old, from everlasting."

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